HISTORICAL SETTING

N 631

I. General History of Relations with China

N 635 [162] N [633] [177] [668]

Northwest China, once a major administrative region of Communist China, is an arbitrary political union of widely dissimilar geographical areas inhabited by a conglomeration of diverse ethnic groups. At the eastern end of this vast wedge-shaped region is Shensi, which has been an integral part of China Proper throughout history and is inhabited almost exclusively by Chinese. Although it is only one-seventeenth of the total area, this single province holds almost half of the population of the Northwest. Sian, the provincial seat of Shensi, has been in centuries past and still is today China's political and military base for the control of the Northwest and has been the center for the diffusion of Chinese culture to the Northwest in the past and of Communist ideology in the present.

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At the western end of the Northwest region of China is the province of Sinkiang or Chinese Turkestan. Its territory occupies half the area of the Northwest but its population is only a seventh of the total. Three-quarters of the inhabitants are Uighurs, a people Turkic in speech and Moslem in religion. The rest is divided among thirteen nationalities.

N 635

In the north is the now abolished province of Ninghsia, inhabited largely by Mongols. In the south is Chinghai (also known as Kokonor) with a heterogeneous population of Mongols, Chinese and Tibetans. The Gobi Desert, which pushes south to Ninghsia, and the highlands of Chinghai constricts the habitable area into an hourglass shape, forming a corridor connecting Shensi in the east and Sinkiang in the west. This is the province of Kansu.

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A. The Role of the Kansu Panhandle

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All traffic between China Proper and Turkestan has been funnelled through the narrow confines of this corridor. The ancient Silk Road started from its terminus at Sian (known in the past as Ch'ang-an) and wound its way, via the Kansu Corridor, into Chinese Turkestan where it branched into the northern and southern routes to bypass the towering Tienshan Mountains. The conquering armies of Han, T'ang and Ch'ing had marched out through this narrow passageway to assert the political rule of China over the desert wastes and oasis towns of Turkestan. Hordes of nomads, lured by the lush plains and opulent cities of China, have poured through this funnel to raid and pillage and, when successful, to found militaristic kingdoms. This was the route worn deep by the trudging feet of camel caravans bearing the tea and silk and porcelain of China to bazaars in the Near East and even to the markets of Byzantium and Rome. In the train of these caravans travellers have come into China, from the Buddhist missionary, Kumarajiva,

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*175 to the Venetian merchant, Marco Polo.

● 487 During the centuries when China faced the land frontier of the
S Northwest and the Silk Road was the main channel of China's inter-
175 course with the outside world, the target of China's imperialistic
487 expansion, when strong, was the domination of the petty states of Central Asia. The principal strategic pass that must be held to prevent invading armies from pouring in and ravaging China, in periods of weakness and division, was Yü-men, the Jade Gate, in northwestern China.

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B. Recurring Cycles of Nomadic Eruptions

As the advance and recession of Chinese power in Turkestan reflected the vigor and the decline of Chinese dynasties,(a feature of Chinese history discussed in the historical section of the General Handbook), so were the outbursts and withdrawals of the nomads the manifestations of their activity and passivity. The juxtaposition and interaction of the Chinese scheme of advance and withdrawal with the nomadic scheme shaped the dynamics and course
S of history of Northwest China. Together with Inner Mongolia,
[131] Sinkiang forms a broad semicircular belt, which marks the marginal zone between China and the steppes and is the amphitheater for the vast age-long struggle between the sedentary and nomadic peoples.

N

1. Earliest invasions

*175 The alternate thrust of the nomads into this marginal zone,
648 at times even penetrating into the heartland of China, and their
retraction into the steppes, have been a recurring phenomenon
S
175 in the history of Central Asia. With tidal regularity, the nomads
648 have surged forth when China was weak and divided, only to ebb when China was strong and united. As far back as the eighth century B.C., when China was beginning to disintegrate into warring states, there were invasions of China by the north and northwestern peoples called Ti and Jung. In Central Asia there was the expansion of the Scythians. From the third to the first century B.C., the confederacy of nomads led by the Hsiung-nu or Huns were active in China's Northwest. During this same period Central Asia was overrun first by the Greeks of Alexander's army, then by the Yüeh-chih and, further east, by the Sakas and Wu-sun. The defense measures of the Ch'in dynasty and the military advance of the Chinese during the Han dynasty in the first century B.C. and the first century A.D., held the Huns in check and finally succeeded in splitting up the Hun confederation.

2. Turkic incursions

From the fourth to the seventh centuries, with China weak and divided, the border peoples from China's northern and northwestern frontiers breached China's defenses. First in dribbles and then in raging torrents they occupied the northwest and poured

*175 to the southeast, were interested in the recovery of Turkestan. They had a purely defensive policy for the northwest land frontier. They fortified the passes in the Kansu Corridor and conciliated the Uighur inhabitants of Turkestan by granting them honors and privileges and not interfering with their governments.

The Ming court was more concerned with the Mongols in the north. The strongest of these were the Oirats who at first submitted and then rebelled. The Yung-lo emperor personally led a series of expeditions into Mongolia and succeeded in holding them in check. But as the military strength of Ming China ebbed after his death, their power increased. In 1449, one of their chiefs, Esen, inflicted a disastrous defeat on the Ming forces and took the Ming emperor as prisoner. At the height of their power, the Oirats controlled an area as far west as the northern portion of Tienshan, as far south as Kansu and as far east as Chahar.

Throughout the Ming period, there were incessant encroachments by the Oirat, but the most serious were those led by Altan Khan in the 16th century. In his three major invasions of China, his horsemen despoiled the provinces of Shansi, Ninghsia and Kansu and extended the orbit of his power from Uriangghai in the north to Chinghai and Tibet in the south. He built a vast, though evanescent Mongol empire. Finally, in his old age he accepted a title from the Ming court and halted his raids on China.

Thus, for about eight hundred years from the latter part of the T'ang to the beginning of the Ch'ing, the extent of the Chinese empire did not go beyond the Kansu Corridor and the vast region of the Northwest was free of Chinese rule. During this long period, the Chinese were not only unable to recover Turkestan [167] but they were also uninterested in its recovery. The advance of the border peoples into China's North and Northwest pushed the Chinese to the South and Southeast. Gradually, with the rise of the southeastern coastlands as the cultural and economic centers of China and with the development of maritime travel, there was greater intercourse between China and the outside world by sea. The nation turned towards the Southeast to face the sea and the importance of the Kansu Corridor declined to that of the backdoor of China.

*175 13 ● 487 Another reason for the reorientation was economic. Climatic changes resulting in increased aridity led to the shrinkage of the chain of oases that formed the caravan routes. This made travel difficult, and the desiccation of the soil reduced the fertility of the Wei River valley, once the home of Chinese civilization and *175 73 166 the base for China's imperialist expansion. Natural calamities, such as floods, droughts, pestilence, and famine, and the devastation of wars added to the impoverishment of the area and quickened the shift of population centers from the Northwest to the *175 633 Southeast. Sian (Ch'ang-an) the capital of China for two thousand

+175 years, ceased to be the leading metropolis, dropping in rank to
[633] a city of secondary importance. This decline of the Northwest
[178] had been in process since the end of the Han dynasty and had
accelerated during the T'ang. The decreasing productivity of the
land made it harder and harder to maintain large bodies of troops
+175 to defend the Northwest frontier. Supplies for the defense forces,
724 not to say for campaigns to the Far West had to be brought up by
canals from the Southeast, a tenuous system which, once obstruc-
487 ted, would constrain the withdrawal of Chinese troops from far-
flung outposts in the Northwest and render abortive any attempt
at their recovery.

000 II. The Succession of Steppe Empires

A. The Scythians

Historically, the first empire to break out of the steppes was founded by the Scythians. They are supposed to have been a North-Iranian people, who nomadized in what is today's Turkestan and Western Siberia. The Greek historian, Herodotus, has left a rather intimate description of their manners and folkways. They are mentioned also in Assyrian, Persian and Indian sources (under the name Saka). Of the three groups of Scythians who inhabited respectively the Ferghana-Kashgar area, the lower reaches of the Syr Darya, and western Siberia north and northeast of the Caspian Sea, it was the last that set events in motion. In the second half of the eighth century B.C. this group fell upon the Cymmerians, a Thraco-Phrygean people settled north of the Black Sea. This conquest catalysed a migration of nations, the echo of which was heard even by the prophets of Israel. It was the first known inroad of the steppe nomads into the southern cultural world.

The Scythian Empire continued until the third century B.C. Its southward drive under the leadership of Ishpakai was stopped by the Assyrians in 678 B.C. Ishpakai's successors, Bartatua and Madyes, expanded their empire towards the south and the west. In ca. 628 B.C., however, they were repulsed by the Medes under Kyaxares. The Persians under Cyrus battled against the Scythians in the region east of Khiva in ca. 529 B.C. and 15 years later under Darius in the southern Ukraine. The Scythians finally were decimated by the Sarmathians, another North-Iranian nomadic tribe, who pushed the Scythians into the Crimea towards the end of the third century B.C.

There is abundant archeological evidence of the Scythian Empire. Their particular art style, the so-called animal style, set the pattern for subsequent craftsmen of the steppe. Its influence was felt all over Central Asia well into the confines of early Chinese dynasties.

161 Beyond the Alashan, Nan-shan, and Ta-chi-shih mountains in
133 most parts of Chinghai, western Kansu including most parts
of former Ninghsia covering the Alashan and Khara Gobi
deserts and all Sinkiang, where the annual rainfall is generally
below five inches except in the higher elevations, the small
population is intensely concentrated in a number of small
isolated oases scattered along the base of the snow-capped
high ranges. Numerous snow-fed mountain streams come down
the Nan-shan, the Kunlun, the Tien-shan and the Altai.
[312] Before they disappear in the nearby deserts, they provide a
reliable source of water for irrigation. Hence a string of
487 oases are scattered between deserts and mountains. The so-
317 called Kansu corridor along the Nan-shan, the Silk Road
along the Kunlun, the Tien-shan nan-lu (Southern Road)
361 and the Tien-shan pei-lu (Northern Road) along the south and
161 north foothills of the Tien-shan (Celestial Mountain) Range
are all developed along these oases which provide the only
available natural stations along all the trade routes through
Northwest China and Central Asia. These oases are the sole
centers of human settlement for agriculture, horticulture,
animal husbandry, and pastoralism. Since they are so intensively
487 cultivated and populated, in most cases they form administrative
361 hsien or county seats, i.e. from southeast to northwest along
634 the Kansu corridor, Ku-lang, Wu-wei, Yung-chang, Shan-
161 tan, Chang-yeh, Lin-tse, Kao-tai, Chiu-chuan, Yü-men,
An-hsi, Tun-huang, etc. Along the Silk Road at the foot of
the Kunlun Mountains east-westward are No-chiang, Chieh-mo,
Keriya (Yu-tien), Tse-leh, Lo-pu, Ho-tien, Mo-yü, Pi-shan,
Yeh-chang, Sha-che, Ko-ko, Yingihissar (Ying-chi-sha),
Shu-le, etc. Along the Tien-shan
nan-lu, east-westward are Qumol (Hami), Shan-shan, Turfan,
Ho-sho, Yen-chi, Korla, Lun-tai, Ku-che, Pai-chang, Wen-
su, Aksu, Ke-ping, Pa-chu, Ka-shih, Shu-fu, etc. Along the
Tien-shan pei-lu, east-westward are Barkul (Chenhsi), Chitai,
Urumchi, Chang-chi, Ching-hua, Sui-lai, Wu-su, and Ching-ho
to Sui-ting in the Ili valley. Thus the distribution of population
occurs in clusters or isolated pockets of densely peopled
areas, dotted along the foot of the high mountains, but separated
by desert wastes.

361 In the enclosed upland Tsaidam and Koko Nor Basins of
233 Chinghai province, a small number of nomads exist mainly in
the part which is oriented toward and exposed to the limited
311 moist wind, where the grassland is suitable for limited grazing.
The location varies from basin to basin. In the Tsaidam, the
pasture is found in the southeastern part, while in the northwestern
part lies the Koko Beile Desert. In the case of the Koko Nor Basin,
the climatic orientation is reversed. Similar conditions prevail

TRADE

I. The Pre-Communist Period

Trade in the Northwest before the Communist conquest may be discussed by provinces.

A. Shensi

438 Trade between Shensi and the rest of the country was carried
491 out mainly through the historical Great Northwest Highway,
which links this province with Hankow and Tientsin on the one
hand, and Kansu and Sinkiang on the other. Since 1937, the Na-
[496] tional government has undertaken to extend the Lunghai Railway
to the Northwest, and before the Communists took over it had
reached T'ien-shui, Kansu. In addition, the northern part of
● [487] this province was closely connected with Shansi through three
regional highways, and the southern part was linked with Han-
kow through the Han River, and with Szechwan through the
Szechwan-Shensi bridle pass.

366 The commercial centers of this province are as follows:
(1) Sian, the provincial capital, which not only commands the
635 trade of the whole province, but also carries considerable tran-
sit trade; (2) T'ung-kuan, which is a transportation center be-
tween the three provinces of Shensi, Shansi and Honan; (3) An-
k'ang, also known as Hsin-an, a commercial center of the Han
River drainage area; (4) San-yuan, the commercial center of the
so-called North Shensi Plain; and (5) Han-chung, also known as
Nan-cheng, a trade center between Shensi and Szechwan.

439 According to statistics of 1934, a normal year in pre-war
times, the total value of imports and exports of this province,
435 including foreign trade, amounted to 57,168,455 yüan, most of
*175 which were carried out through Tientsin and Hankow. The de-
tails are shown in the following table:

Table I: The Exports and Imports of Shensi, 1934

Description	Value (yüan)	
A. Exports:		19,087,221
raw cotton	16,250,000	
hemp	200,000	
raw silk	300,000	
wool	160,000	
fur and hide	757,221	
tung oil	900,000	
raw paints and paint oil	250,000	
fungs-in-trees	270,000	

439	B. Imports		38,081,234
435	textiles	22,209,861	
+175	sundries	6,968,868	
	medical herbs and drugs	2,232,542	
	apparels	1,704,563	
	machinery and iron goods	1,295,837	
	chinaware	1,087,299	
	edibles	781,044	
	kerosene and oil	701,134	
	cosmetics	572,751	
	paper	527,235	
	vehicles and transportation equipment	76,235	
	Grand Total		57,168,455

Source: Shina Shōbetsū Zenshi, 1943 ed., Vol. 6, pp. 805-15.

B. Kansu

439 Aside from the historical Great Northwest Highway, trade
• 487 between Kansu and the rest of the country was carried out
491 through the following routes: (1) the Yellow River, including its
tributary, the Huang River or Hsi-ning-Ho, which is navigable between Hsi-ning and Pao-t'ou, the latter being the terminal of the Peking-Pao-t'ou Railway; (2) the caravan route between Hsi-ning and Ninghsia via Lanchou; and (3) the highway between Kansu and Szechwan.

366 The commercial cities of this province are as follows:
635 (1) Lanchou (also known as Kao-lan), the provincial capital of
Kansu and the commercial center of not only Kansu, but also Chinghai and Ninghsia; (2) Ping-liang, the commercial center of east Kansu; (3) T'ien-shui, the commercial center of south Kansu; (4) Lin-hsia, the commercial center of the area to the west of the T'ao River; and (5) Chang-yeh, the commercial center of the Ho-hsi Corridor.

439 According to 1933 statistics, the total value of imports and
435 exports of Kansu amounted to 7,933,554 yüan, about one eighth
+175 of that of Shensi. The details are shown on the following table:

Table II: The Exports and Imports of Kansu, 1933

Description	Value (yüan)	
A. Exports:		1,536,832
fur and hide	714,105	
medical herbs	605,319	
tobacco	217,408	

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B. Imports:		6,456,722
cotton piece goods	669,884	
raw cotton	47,353	
paper	102,340	
iron and copper goods	40,362	
tea	145,786	
seafood	68,755	
chinaware	13,850	
silk	193,264	
tobacco	48,300	
sundries	5,015,022	
miscellaneous	113,793	
Grand Total		7,993,554

Source: Shina Shōbetsu Zenshi, 1943 ed., Vol. 7, pp. 634-37.

C. Ninghsia

366 The trade in Ninghsia is centered around its capital city,
• 487 Ninghsia, which is the midpoint of the two important trade routes in the Northwest, one being the Yellow River, and the other being the caravan routes. The Yellow River route is usu-
487 ally divided into the following six sections:
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Table III: The Yellow River Route (downstream)

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Places	Length (li) (1 li = 1890 ft.)	Days of Journey
Hsi-ning–Lanchou*	480	3-5
Lanchou–Chung-wei	740	3-4
Chung-wei–Ninghsia	350	3-4
Ninghsia–Shih-ts'uan-tzu	190	2
Shih-ts'uan-tzu–Teng-kuo	200	2
Teng-kuo–Pao-t'ou	1,000	7-10
Total	2,960	20-27

*Including its tributary, the Huang River or Hsi-ning-ho.
Source: Shino Shōbetsu Zenshi, 1943 ed., Vol. 7, pp. 640-41.

487 The caravan routes consist of the following:

1. from Hsi-ning to Ninghsia via Lanchou,
2. from Sinkiang to Ninghsia via Alashan,
3. from Pao-t'ou to Ninghsia via the Ordos,
4. from Ping-liang, Kansu, to Ninghsia via Hua-ma-chih.

[492] A caravan used to have thirty to fifty camels, each camel carrying about 375 pounds of goods and traveling about fifty to seventy li a day. (For modern highways see section Communications.)

439 According to 1933 statistics, the total value of exports and
435 imports of Ninghsia amounted to 6,310,000 yüan, a little less
*175

N 439 than that of Kansu. The details are shown in the following table:
435
*175 Table IV: The Exports and Imports of Ninghsia, 1933

Description	Value (yüan)	
A. Exports:		4,040,000
opium	2,400,000	
sheep's pelts	900,000	
medical herbs	450,000	
wool	240,000	
hair-like weeds	50,000	
B. Imports:		2,270,000
cotton piece goods	1,400,000	
silk, woolen cloth, cosmetics	300,000	
sundries	120,000	
cotton	150,000	
grain	300,000	
Grand Total		6,310,000

Source: Shina Shōbetsu Zenshi, 1943 ed., Vol. 7, pp. 638-39.

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366 D. Chinghai
Trade in Chinghai is centered around Hsi-ning, the provincial
635 capital. Aside from the two routes which connect Hsi-ning and
N 487 Lanchou, there is another route leading to Tibet and still another
N 439 to Sinkiang. The main exports were fur, hide, grain, salt,
lumber and medical herbs, among which fur and hide, the staples,
are mostly shipped to Tientsin for re-export. The main imports are cotton piece goods and silk. Trade statistics are not available. It is also known that there was considerable trade between Chinghai and India, but details are lacking.

S E. Sinkiang
439 Trade in Sinkiang is a little more complicated, because Sinkiang
trades not only with agricultural China, but also with
S Soviet Russia, India and Afghanistan. So far as the trade with
439 agricultural China is concerned, there are three main trade
487 routes. One runs from Urumchi to Tientsin via Kobdo, Urga and
491 Pao-t'ou, generally known as the Outer Mongolia Great Grass
Route. Another runs from Urumchi to Tientsin via Qomul (Hami), Darkhan League, Kuei-sui and Pao-t'ou, generally known as the Inner Mongolia Lesser Grass Route. And still another is the historical Great Northwest Highway which leads to Sian via Qomul (Hami) and Lanchou. The Outer Mongolian route had been out of use since the independence of Outer Mongolia. The Inner
S Mongolia route was originally a caravan route. But since 1933,
439 the section between Urumchi and Kuei-sui has been open to
491 motor traffic under the name of Sinkiang-Suiyuan highway.

COMMUNICATIONS

I. Introduction

A. Geographical Setting

101 . The Northwest Region under Communist China consists of the provinces of Shensi, Kansu (including former Ninghsia province), Chinghai and Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region. It is surrounded on the northeast and east by Outer Mongolia, the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Shansi, Honan and Hupei, and on the west and northwest by Kashmir, Afghanistan and Russia. Szechwan (including Sikang) and Tibet border it on the south.

B. Historical Background of the Northwest Trade Routes

*175 ● 487 [439) Commerce was possibly the main factor in the development of roads. In ancient times, the localization of scarce and desirable goods such as silk, led to definite long distance overland routes between China and Central Asia. The routes started either from Shensi, or Honan in China proper, and led via Kansu to Sinkiang, known as Chinese Turkestan. There were two important roads which connected China with Central Asia:

1) The Southern (or Silk) Road, from Tun-hwang in Kansu along the southern part of the Lob Nor and then along the southern brim of the Taklahakan desert via the cities of Yü-tien, Hotien (Khotan) and Kashgar to Ulugh Chat, thence a trade route leading to Central Asia through the Pamir Pass. Another road led from Turfan via Kurle Aksu and Kashgar also to Ulugh Chat.

2) The Northern Road went through the eastern part of Sinkiang along the Tienshan North Road by Hami, Turfan, Urumchi, Wusu, and Ili to Hocheng and thence to Alma Ata.

The origin of the caravan trade can be traced back even beyond the time of historical records, so we have no idea when these roads came into being. However, it was over these trade routes that the people of the East and West first met on peaceful terms, long before the seas had been navigated. To the ancient merchants this kind of route was the most natural and direct way to guide a caravan from Eastern Turkestan (or from China Proper via Turkestan) toward Bactria, or following the opposite direction from west of the Pamirs toward the Yellow River. This old trade found one of its best markets in the ancient Roman Empire, to which, among other things, the large amount of silk exported from China gave its name to one of the trade routes.

*175 648 487 The importance of China's commercial relations with Bactria and the Mediterranean provinces during the Han dynasty made it advisable for the court to send there such envoys as Chang Ch'ien in 122 B.C. and Pan Ch'ao under the Emperor Ming (A.D. 58-76) both empowered to negotiate treaties with the kingdoms of the west.

*175 It was the Mongol Empire under Chingis Khan (1162-1227) which
487 extended her power from the Yellow River through the Northern
648 Road across Asia into Poland and Hungary to the Danube. Marco Polo went to China from Italy in 1275 by way of the Southern Road. Through the centuries, however, the life of the trade routes was subject to frequent fluctuations. There have been interruptions to commerce during the periods of warfare when the Huns came south of the mountains, and the roads were overrun. But as soon as hostilities ceased, the merchants would resume their accustomed task of rebuilding their caravans and carrying loads of goods eastward and westward.

*175 These trade routes remained significant through the years
487 until modern transportation was introduced to China. Later on,
[491] motor highways were built, based on the old trade routes in this
[496] area. The Lanchow-Urumchi-Alam Ata Railway is presently being constructed along the old Northern Road. Even so, caravans still travel throughout the northwest.

II. Communications Development before and under the Nationalist Government

A. Railways

*175 496 In the vast area of Northwest China, there was only one railway line which was an extension of the Lunghai Railway running to Shensi province. This railway is an east-west trunk line, starting from a seaport in Kiangsu, running through Honan and Shensi, and now into Kansu. Construction was started on different sections as early as 1903, but owing to civil strife only the 810 kilometer section from Taipu Harbor near Haichou in Kiangsu in the east, westward to Ling-pao in Honan, was completed prior to 1930. Construction on the section from Ling-pao to Tung-kuan, a distance of about seventy kilometers, was initiated in 1930 and completed in August, 1932. It was extended another 130 kilometers to Sian in December, 1934. Service was inaugurated before 1937 on the last section in Shensi from Sian to Paoki, a distance of 170 kilometers.

Because of obstructions in Taipu Harbor, a new port at Lien-
[504] yün was built in 1935 to serve this railroad. In the same year, a thirty-seven kilometer extension to join the new port with the trunk line at Hsin-pu was completed.

During the war, railway construction in the Northwest was emphasized. To solve the serious shortage of coal on the Lunghai Railway, a branch line of about 138 kilometers was created in December, 1940, from Hsien-yang northward through San-yüan and Yao-hsien to Tung-ch'uan in Tung-kuan county. Despite the extreme shortage of rail-building materials and manpower, work on the extension of the Paoki-T'ien-shui section began in 1939 and

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*175 496 it was opened for traffic in the autumn of 1945. This 165 kilometer railway ran from Paoki following a stretch of the Wei River to T'ien-shui in Kansu. This Paoki-Tien-shui area was regarded as a place of great strategic importance during the war.

Excluding the Hsien-yang-Tung-ch'uan branch of 138 kilometers, total mileage of the Lunghai Railway, before 1949, was about 1,380 kilometers of which the section from Tung-kuan to T'ien-shui running in the Northwest Region was roughly 600 kilometers in length.

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B. Highways

Highway construction in Northwest China had been well-developed up to the war. The main lines may be listed as follows:

	kms.
1. Highways in Shensi:	
Sian-Chang-wu section (of Sian-Lanchow Highway)	210
Sian-Tungkuan	145
Sian-Paoki-Ning-chiang section (of Szechwan-Shensi Highway)	500
Sian-Mei-hsien	145
Wei-nan-Tali-Han-cheng	180
2. Highways in Kansu:	
Lanchou-Ping-liang-Chang-wu section (of Sian-Lanchou Highway)	550
Lanchou-Yumen-Hsin-hsin-chia section (of Kansu-Sinkiang Highway)	1,400
Lanchou-Hsiang-tang section (of Kansu-Chinghai Highway)	120
Lanchou-Min-hsien section	350
Hua-chia-ling-T'ien-shui	210
Ping-liang-Kuyüan-Tung-hsin (in Ninghsia)	220
3. Highways in Ninghsia (now part of Kansu):	
Ninghsia (Yin-ch'uan)-Tung-hsin	210
Ninghsia-Shan-pa (in Inner Mongolia)	325
Ninghsia-Ho-chia-chi (toward Lanchou)	240
4. Highways in Chinghai:	
Hsining-Hsiang-tang section	110
Hsining-Kuei-teh	108
Hsining-Lin-hsia (in Kansu)	190
Hsining-Tu-lan (toward Tun-huang)	428
Hsining-Ta-ho-pa (toward Yu-shu)	327
S 491 5. Highways in Sinkiang:	
Urumchi-Hami-Hsin-hsin-chia	835
Urumchi-Wusu-Ili (toward Russia)	691

(Wang, Chin-fu. Hsi-pei ti ti-wen yü jen-wen Huang, Fen-sheng. 127-29; Pien-chiang tun-ken-yüan 126-28.)

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It is interesting to note that part of the highways in Kansu and all those in Sinkiang were built on the old trade routes. Highways in this region were centered at Sian, Lanchow, Ninghsia (Yin-chuan), Hsining and Urumchi.

N
491 Hsining and Urumchi. It should not be overlooked, however, that
• [487] caravan routes (or dirt roads) were still the main auxiliaries to
highway and railway transportation.

In the construction of highways in wartime, emphasis had been laid on building, renovating, and maintaining international lines in order to link the interior provinces with foreign countries. A good example in the Northwest was the 2,674 kilometer highway from Lanchow via Hsin-hsin-chia and Urumchi to Hocheng on the Sino-Soviet border. In addition, the following are among the more important highways built in this region during the war:

1. Han-chung-Pai-ho Highway: This 533-kilometer highway was an important motor-road link between southern Shensi and northern Hupei.

2. T'ien-shui-Shuang-shih-pu Highway: This line of 231 kilometers, from T'ien-shui in southeastern Kansu to Shuang-shih-pu in southwestern Shensi, formed junctions with the Sian-Lanchow and Szechwan-Shensi Highways.

3. A line of 1334 kilometers, linking Ansi in Kansu and Kurle in
N
Sinkiang via Tun-huang, was planned in 1942. Between November,
*[175] 1942, and 1943 the 479 kilometer section from Kurle to Nochiang
N
was completed. Further construction plans were suspended.

491 To cope with the rapidly growing transportation demands, the
485 Nationalist Government had constructed, in 1946, seventy-nine
New Life Movement Service Stations along the 2,200 kilometer
*[179] highway from Kuang-yüan in Szechwan to Chiu-chuan in Kansu, in
order to facilitate the movement of migrants from the interior provinces to the frontier area. This kind of station was divided into four classes: the special first class which furnished room and board, medical and postal services and caravan equipment; the special second class, without medical and postal services; general first and general second classes offered much less service. This service was designed to provide travellers with a feeling of security and hence aid the government in its policy of a movement to the Northwest.

N
487 C. Inland Waterway Navigation:

Rivers in the Northwest were not very serviceable. The upper stretch of the Yellow River from Chung-wei to Pao-t'ou in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was navigable, especially for
N
a distance of about 100 kilometers around Shih-tsuei-shan, where
487 a steamer line was opened for traffic. The passages from Lan-
501 chou northward to Chung-wei and westward to Hsining were navigable only with ox-hide or sheepskin rafts. In Shensi province, both the Wei and Han Rivers were navigable with boats (not steamers) starting from Hsing-ping and Mien-hsien respectively. In
S
Sinkiang, on the upper stretch of the Tarim River, native boats
487 and wooden rafts were used while the Irtych River, starting at
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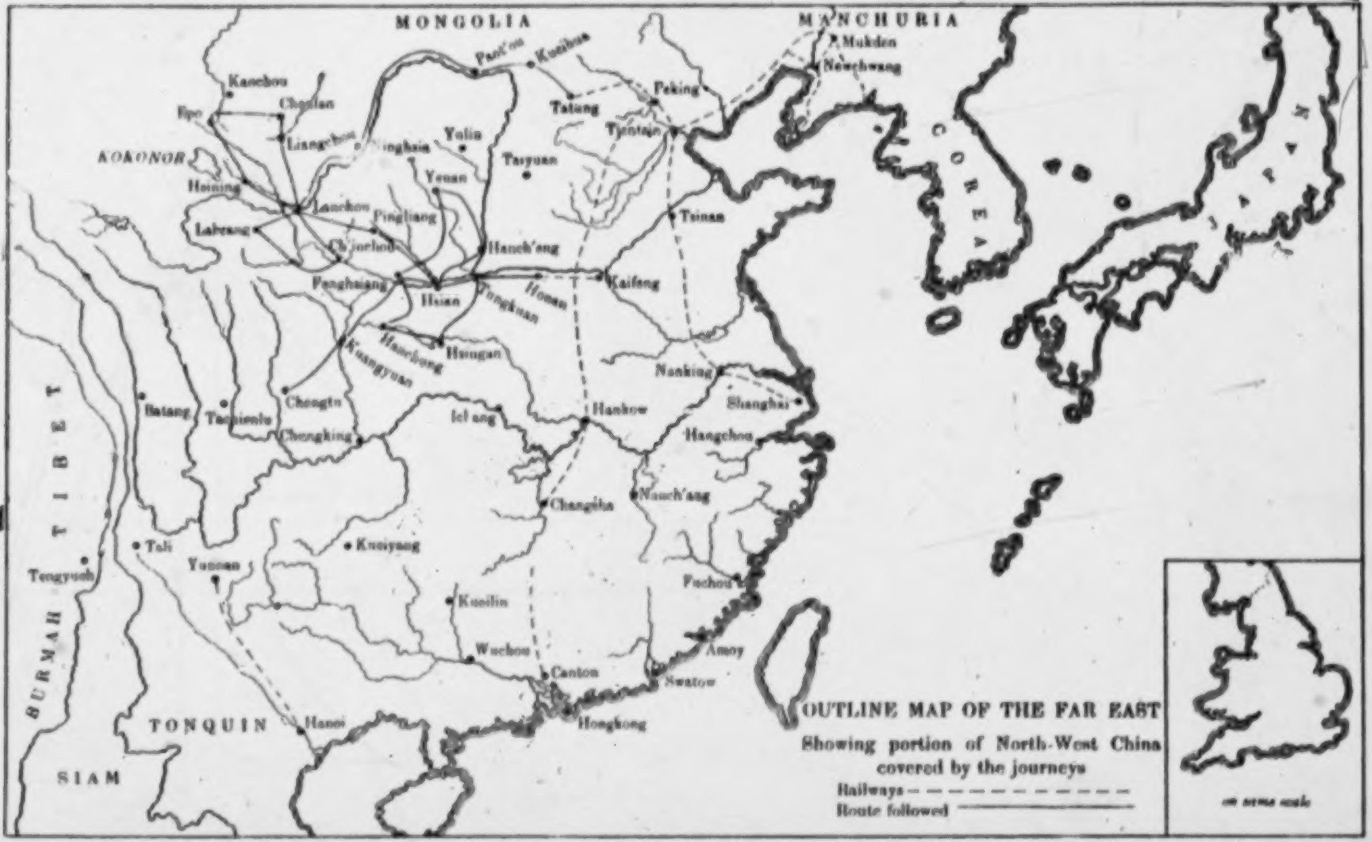
496

FACING P. 1


MONGOLIA
MANCHURIA
Mukden
Newchwang
Pant'ou
Kueihua
Kanchou
Chenfan
Liangchou
Ninghsia
Yulin
Tatung
Peking
Tientsin
Taiyuan
KOKONOR
Hsining
Lanchou
Yenan
Pingliang
Labrang
Ch'inchou
Hanch'eng
Tsinan
Fenghsiang
Hsian
Tungkuan
Honan
Kaifeng
Hanchung
Hsingan
Kuangyuan
Chengtu
Batang
Tachienlu
Chungking
Ichang
Hankow
Nanking
Shanghai
Hangchou
Changsha
Nanch'ang
Kueiyang
Tali
Tengyueh
Yunnan
Kueilin
Fuchou
Wuchou
Canton
Amoy
Swatow
Hongkong
Hanoi
TIBET
BURMAH
TONQUIN
SIAM
COREA
JAPAN
on same scale

OUTLINE MAP OF THE FAR EAST

Showing portion of North-West China covered by the journeys

Railways
Route followed

CHAPTER I

FROM RAILHEAD IN HONAN TO HSIAN FU, THE CAPITAL OF SHENSI

Approaches to the North West—By train to railhead at Kuanyint'ang—Along the Yellow River to T'ungkuan—Road and railway construction in China—Up the Wei valley plain past Huayin, Huachou, Weinan, and Lint'ung to Hsian—Antiquities—Recent events in Shensi.

THERE are a certain limited number of trails leading into 487
Shensi and Kansu from the coast, namely, from Honan *via* the T'ungkuan passage, from Hankow up the Han river, from T'aiyuan in Shansi *via* Suitê to Ninghsia, and from Kueihuach'eng *via* the Yellow River and the Ordos to Northern Kansu. We entered the North West by the first named route and eventually returned by the last named. The T'ungkuan trail, which nowadays carries most of the traffic, follows the valleys of the Yellow and Wei rivers through a natural gap in the mountains leading into the heart of the North West. Along this road has passed much of the traffic with Central and Western Asia since the dawn of history, and along it is one day to be built a trunk railway from the coast to the confines of Turkestan.

Starting from Peking, the Peking-Hankow railway is 496
followed as far as Cheng Chou, the junction with the Kaifêng Fu Honan Fu line, which used to be known as the Pien Lo railway, but is now a section of the great East and West trunk line called the Lung Hai, meaning that it connects (or rather will one day in the distant future connect) Hai Chou on the coast of Kiangsu with Lung, the classical name for Kansu. Cheng Chou is a busy railway settlement attached to a little walled city; on a windy day in the spring it is an indescribably beastly spot, the whole place being shrouded in whirling dust, sand, and loess.

Leaving Cheng Chou the train soon enters a maze of loess hills through which it crawls to emerge near Kung Hsien on the valley plain of the Lo River, which is followed to Honan Fu (Loyang). The rolling stock on this section

minded foreigner is apt to find it intensely wearisome. 493
A pony which can pace a little (the five mile an hour amble, 516
in Chinese, *tsou*) provides on the whole the least tiring method of travel in the North Western provinces; chairs are little used except in the Southern portions, and always entail trouble in getting bearers. We used ponies and pack mules throughout our journeys.

Leaving Kuanyint'ang there is a drop into a ravine and 487
then a stiff climb of a few hundred feet to reach the pass 491
over a range of mountains, the watershed between the Lo 133
and Yellow rivers. This ridge is really the end of one of the principal ranges of the Ch'inling Shan, the one which runs east and west right across Shensi immediately south of the Wei River. From the pass the road descends through undulating country to the township of Changmao Chen, where one is once more in the loess. From here it crosses a loess plateau, with typical valley rifts on either side, finally descending for the last mile to the village of Tzuchung. Changmao and Tzuchung, called 40 and 65 li from Kuanyint'ang respectively, are both used as stages for halts, but if the journey to Hsian is to be done in good time it is best to try and reach Shen Chou, another 50 li further on, on the first day's march. The road descends through deep loess cuttings to reach the latter, a little city on the banks of the Yellow River.

The traffic on this road is immense and an almost [484]
constant stream of carts and pack mules, laden mostly with cotton and hides on their way from Shensi to the coast, is met. In wet weather the mud is appalling; in dry weather the dust is if anything worse. There may be a happy mean, but the traveller who strikes it can consider himself lucky. The first time we travelled this road was in the mud; the second time, during the dry weather in early April, in the dust. In such weather the road is entirely hidden in vast clouds of dust in which the traffic is permanently shrouded. Those who have had experience of loess dust, which is so fine that it can be almost rubbed into the pores of the skin, will know what this means. The horseman can sometimes get away from the main road and its ankle-deep layer of dust by following small paths through the fields; but the passengers in carts and mule litters have to put up with it

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487 and not infrequently arrive at T'ungkuan in a state of collapse.

491 From Shen Chou to Lingpao Hsien, a distance of 45 li, the road runs through deep cuttings in the loess near the right bank, but out of sight, of the Yellow River; and from Lingpao to Wenhsiang Hsien, called 60 li, it runs across a series of bluffs high up above the river; for the first 20 li of this latter stage horsemen can follow a footpath along the river itself, which here rolls its pea-soupy waters through a gorge in the loess hills; wild fowl of all kinds abound here in the spring and can be easily shot. Lingpao and Wenhsiang lie right on the river. Round the latter the loess is much mixed with sand. The barrier range on the traveller's left hand here begins to draw in towards the Yellow River to form the famous narrows at T'ungkuan. From Wenhsiang to T'ungkuan, called 60 li, the road continues through the loess not far from the river. Finally T'ungkuan itself is approached through a deep cutting in the loess hills with gates and walls appearing at intervals after the manner of the Nank'ou Pass in the Peking mountains, with which this famous stronghold may be compared.

487 712 The narrows of T'ungkuan are formed by the Northern barrier range of the Ch'inling Shan and the Yellow River, which here approach to within a few miles of one another, the intervening space being filled by a thick layer of loess hundreds of feet deep, intersected by impassable rifts. Here the Peking road through Shansi *via* T'aiyuan Fu meets the Honan road and continues as one to Hsian Fu, where it bifurcates again, one branch leading south-west to Chengtu and Tibet, and the other north-west to Lanchow and Turkestan. The fortress of T'ungkuan commands the meeting-point of these four highways, and is now and always has been one of the most important strategical points in the interior of China. It will one day be also a considerable railway centre as trunk lines are projected along all these roads. The number of roads leading east and west, north of the Yangtzu, is extraordinarily small, and railways usually seem to find that the ancient highways of traffic and commerce offer the easiest routes through mountainous country. T'ungkuan has from time immemorial served as the gateway from China to Central and Western Asia, and has played

a correspondingly important part in Chinese history. In 762
more recent days too, during the troubles since the fall of
the Manchus in 1911, it has once more figured prominently 487
in the manœuvres of Imperial, Revolutionary, and Republican
armies, brigands, and train bands, while in times of peace
it lends itself admirably, flanked as it is by river and mountain,
to the levying of likin and other barrier tolls dear to the
Chinese official. It is a compact little place, with ramparts
and gates remarkable for their massive size even in China,
the land of walls, overlooking the Yellow River, which
pouring down from the north in a turgid yellow flood here
strikes the Ch'inling Shan and turns sharply to the east.

As we approached T'ungkuan some one noticed three 651
strange pack mules which had attached themselves to our
caravan. Enquiries elicited the fact that they belonged to a
merchant who was endeavouring to smuggle three loads of
Price's candles through the frontier barrier into Shensi by
this means. We had unwillingly to cut him adrift. Unless
accompanied by transit passes goods in transport through
the interior of China are taxed again and again at every
point where a barrier can be erected until the prospective
profit on their sale is eaten up by these tolls and their
further transport becomes futile.

From the railhead at Kuanyint'ang to T'ungkuan is 804
called a distance of 280 li, and can be done in three days.
As far as Lingpao the li are "short li"; thence to T'ungkuan
they are "long li"; the difference is most marked, the short
and the long li averaging about a quarter and a third of a
mile respectively. This absurd and typically Chinese arrangement
is said to be due to the fact that the authorities of
Honan Fu endeavoured in days gone by to lay claim to
the fortress of T'ungkuan on the ground that it was nearer
to their city than to Hsian Fu.

A peculiar four-wheeled cart of prehistoric appearance 493
is used round T'ungkuan, the only place in China where I
have seen a four-wheeled native vehicle. Even the huge
carts which one meets on the grasslands of the Mongolian
border or in the sands of Western Kansu, regular ships of
the desert, and often accommodating whole families, are
always of the familiar two-wheeled type.

From T'ungkuan to Hsian is a distance of 290 li, which 000

CHAPTER II

FROM T'UNGKUAN ON THE YELLOW RIVER ACROSS THE EASTERN CH'INLING SHAN TO HSINGAN ON THE HAN RIVER

Departure from T'ungkuan—Passage of the Ch'inling Shan—Lonan—Shang Chou—The Ko Lao Hui—Shanyang—Chenan—Chaitzu, or hill forts—The White Wolf rebels of 1914—Hsingan—The Eastern Ch'inling Shan.

WE arrived in T'ungkuan one day in early April after a terribly dusty journey from railhead in Honan, and were met there by a large party of officials deputed by the Provincial Government at Hsian to accompany us on our tour round Shensi. When, after the ceremonies of reception were over, I announced to these gentlemen that our destination was to be Hsingan in the Han valley, and that we proposed proceeding there by the shortest possible route, all asserted categorically (though none of them had any knowledge whatever of the country in question) that there was no road from T'ungkuan to Hsingan, and that we must first proceed to Hsian, the provincial capital, whence a suitable road could be found. 487

As soon as one leaves the recognized highways one always meets with the same protest in China—that there is no road in the direction in which one wishes to proceed. But there is a sovereign remedy for this particular difficulty to travel in China which I have scarcely ever known to fail and which I have made use of on many occasions. One sends for a map of the province and notes the next district city to one's starting-point in the direction in which one wishes to proceed; for practically speaking all district cities in China Proper are connected with one another by trails of some kind. In this case an examination of the map showed the city of Lonan due south of T'ungkuan. "Very well," we remark to our Chinese friends, "there may, as you assert, be no road from here to Hsingan, but we will in the first instance proceed to the neighbouring district city of Lonan."

[p. 13]

487 The local magistrate then has to admit that there is certainly
a road to Lonan, but adds that it passes over a terrible
mountain. Further enquiries show that it is of course a
much used trail of two stages of 90 li each.

We left T'ungkuan at daybreak on April 9th, an immense
492 procession of ponies, mules, chairs, baggage coolies, soldiers,
and miscellaneous hangers-on, of which my share amounted
to three riding ponies and five pack mules. There are no
[491] cart roads in Shensi south of the Ch'inling Shan, and the
Chinese always travel where possible in chairs. Having
tried all methods of travel in North China I have come to
the conclusion that a pacing pony with an American saddle
and mules for the baggage are best and quickest, comparative
rapidity of movement being an important point in the
avoidance of undue fatigue; this method of travel is also
far cheaper than chairs and baggage coolies and entails a
minimum of friction over transport arrangements. But the
tracks of Southern Shensi are very hard on the animals,
and it is advisable to carry a good supply of shoes and to
have a man in the caravan who can put them on.

487 The trail runs due south for 40 li ascending gradually
over the loess foothills to the hamlet of Haoch'ayu lying at
184 the mouth of a gloomy gorge in the rocky barrier range of
mountains which bound the Wei River valley on the south.
133 This range, the backbone of China, starts from the highlands
of Northern Tibet and finally loses itself in the plains of
Honan, serving all the way as the watershed between the
Yangtzu and Yellow River basins, and marking the dividing
line between Central and North China; that is to say between
rice-eating peoples who cultivate alluvial valleys with water
buffaloes and employ coolies for transport, and wheat-eating
peoples who cultivate loess plains and uplands and
use ponies, mules, and camels for transport. We call these
mountains Ch'inling, which is really the Chinese name for
the passes across the watershed range.

133 Entering the narrow stony gorge we followed it for about
20 li till it ended in a steep zigzag climb leading to the pass,
487 which like most passes in China is not a saddle but just the
ordinary ridge of the range crossed at the most direct point.
Chinese trails always prefer where possible to go straight
from point to point across the intervening obstacle rather

than to make a detour along an easier line. The summit is 133 about 6000 feet high. A little further along this range to 487 the west is the famous Hua Shan, one of the sacred mountains of China. The Chinese call this pass Ch'inling, though as a matter of fact it is not the watershed.

Travel in China always seems to consist either in trekking across infinite plains or of following up and down river valleys and gorges to and from an endless succession of passes.

This pass is the boundary between the districts of T'ungkuan and Lonan, and a better boundary there could hardly be, for one can almost stand with a foot on either side of the range.

From the top of the pass the path drops steeply for a few hundred feet and then continues for 15 li down a picturesque well-timbered valley to the market village of Hsünchien Ssu, a pleasant little place lying at the junction of two clear mountain streams and surrounded by wooded slopes with pheasants calling in the maize fields. Though one is still in the Yellow River basin, i.e. on the headwaters of the Honan Lo, the bare stony mountains and loess plains of the North have been exchanged for the well-watered pine-clad valleys of Central China.

The next day's march, another long one, brought us to Lonan Hsien. The road continued down the wooded valley for three or four hours' march to the market village of Shihchia P'o where rice cultivation appeared (rice is grown [243] up to about 4000 feet in Shensi), and then turned up a side ravine and crossed a low pass in a range of bare hills giving access to the valley of the Lo Ho, which was followed up to Lonan Hsien. The latter is a small place lying well away from the main roads amongst flat open valleys of red clay backed by mountains, a sort of plateau supported between two series of ranges of the Ch'inling Shan. These shallow valleys contain the headwaters of the River Lo (sometimes referred to by the Chinese as the Honan Lo to distinguish it from the Shensi Lo, the chief river of the latter Province), which flows east past Honan Fu (the old Loyang) to join the Yellow River.

A glance at the map showed our next objective to be the 487 district city of Shang Chou, and as there did not appear to 579

487 be any main roads leading anywhere from Lonan no difficulties were raised except over the prevalence of brigandage.
579 Brigands are of course almost universal in China nowadays, but they are always supposed to be worst in districts marching with a provincial border line, such as those we were now traversing. But our party was too formidable a one to have anything to fear from local brigands such as these.

487 A long day's march brought us to Shang Chou. The track follows up the flat valley of one of the headwaters of
133 the Lo Ho for 20 li, and then crossing a low rise, drops over the edge of the red plateau of Lonan into a narrow winding gorge hemmed in by bare mountains of red sandstone, which is followed until it debouches on to the valley of the Tan Chiang a little above Shang Chou.

634 Shang Chou is nowadays a decayed little place, though formerly quite an important centre, a *Chou* in charge of
487 four surrounding *Hsien*. After the Revolution of 1911 the former *Fu*, *Chou*, *T'ing*, etc. (Prefectures, sub-Prefectures, and so on) were all reduced to the rank of *Hsien*, or district, of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class, the class being determined largely, it seems, by the land-tax receipts, and, as many districts have been entirely renamed, most of the existing maps of China are in this respect out of date. Shang Chou, now called Shang Hsien, is a 1st class district. It lies in the valley of the Tan Chiang, an affluent of the Han River, on one of the most important trade routes in and out of Shensi, that from Hsian Fu to Lant'ien, across the Ch'inling Shan by two low passes, and down the valley of the Tan Chiang to the mart of Lungchuchai, whence boats ply *via* Chingtzu Kuan in Honan to the Han River, Laoho K'ou, and Hankow; though the importance of this route has somewhat declined since the railway from Honan Fu has reached to within three and a half days of T'ungkuan.

At Shang Chou we were in the basin of the Yangtzu, the insignificant rise on the edge of the plateau of Lonan being the Yangtzu Yellow River watershed.

871 We were here quartered in the local school, which, as we usually found to be the case, was easily the best and cleanest building in the place. The existence of a comparatively well-kept school house, with maps and educational

575 the more respectable inhabitants. At the time of writing
nearly all the soldiers and brigands in Shensi, as well as
635 many civil and military officials, and in certain districts a
high proportion of the entire adult male population, are
579 members, and the administration of the province is largely
in their hands. There may be some good in the Ko Lao Hui,
but the writer, who has seen their pernicious influence at
work throughout Szechuan, Shensi, and parts of Kansu, has
never heard of it. To the ordinary observer the society
appears to exist for the purpose of practising blackmail and
terrorism, and securing mutual protection in the commission of every variety of crime. Amongst its members
are special bands expert in gambling, kidnapping, piracy,
highway robbery, and similar pursuits. Others join merely
in order to secure immunity from the depredations of
[627] more active members. Offences against the rules of the
society[1] are drastically dealt with by punishments such as
death, mutilation, gouging out of eyes, etc., carried into
effect by members specially told off for that purpose; while
should these avenging angels fall by some mischance into
the grips of the law, the society will see to it that they do
not come to any harm and are well supplied with wine and
opium while in prison. The Ko Lao Hui has many aliases,
Chiang Hu Hui, Hu Kuo Chun, etc., and they are brigands
one day, patriot rebels the next, regular soldiers the next,
and so on. One of the first reforms to be carried into effect
by a strong administration in Western China is to extirpate them root and branch, as the Manchus were always
endeavouring to do.

487 The next stage in our journey southwards to the Han
valley was the district city of Shanyang, distant 140 li, two
133 days' march. The trail leaves the valley of the Tan Chiang
and strikes into the mountains to the south. For half a day
we marched up a winding gorge, and then crossing three
sandstone ridges one after the other, the highest about
4000 feet, descended to the market village of Heishan
Chieh, 70 li from Shang Chou, where we halted for the
night. The mountains in this neighbourhood are most
intricate, with streams flowing in all directions, but the
general feature seems to be a series of ridges trending from
N.W. to S.E. The scenery is very agreeable, red sandy

[1] [Ko Lao Hui secret society--ANALYST]

mountains, pine trees, and clear streams flowing through 487
narrow cultivated valleys abounding in pheasants.

The following day we crossed another low pass, the 133
boundary between Shang Chou and Shanyang districts, and then followed down a winding ravine for the rest of the way to Shanyang Hsien. The latter is a tiny place hidden away in a wilderness of red sandstone hills and mountains.

At Shanyang we struck a recognized road of sorts leading 487
south to a place called Manch'uan Kuan on the Hupei
border, whence boats can be taken down a stream called 491
the Chia Ho across a corner of N.W. Hupei to Paiho Hsien
on the Han River, and thence up stream again to Hsingan. 505
To get into a boat wherever possible is the aim of every Chinese traveller, which, though rarely attainable in North China, is very natural considering the state of the so-called roads and the hardships of long overland journeys, and my Chinese companions were unanimous in discovering that this was the only possible route to Hsingan. But the object of our journey being—to use the expression of one of my French-speaking colleagues from the Wai Chiao Pu—"de parcourir toute la province de Shensi aussi rapidement que possible," I had no intention of taking a boat journey across N.W. Hupei, nor to waste a week in being dragged up the Han from Paiho Hsien to Hsingan; and therefore announced Chenan Hsien to be the next stage in our journey, this place lying to the S.W. and appearing to offer an alternative route. This produced a flood of expostulations and protests in regard to the difficulties of that road, which subsequently
proved not unfounded. The district magistrate on being 487
referred to admitted that there was quite a good trail to
Chenan, and said that the difficulties of this route were 133
reported to lie between the latter place and Hsingan. However, adhering to our usual practice, we made Chenan, distant about 230 li, three days' march, our immediate objective.

The first stage was an easy one of about 60 li. The trail lay down the valley for three hours' march to a point where the latter ended abruptly in an impassable gorge, and then turned up a ravine to the west, which was followed to a low pass with a steep descent the other side to the hamlet of Niuerhch'uan, lying in a small valley in the usual red sandstone mountains.

487 712 All along this road across the eastern end of the Ch'inling ranges a large proportion of the hill tops are crowned with walled strongholds called *Chai* which serve as refuges for the inhabitants of the farms and villages in the valleys in times of trouble. These fortified hill tops are a characteristic feature of S.E. Shensi and N.E. Szechuan. The better ones contain houses all ready for receiving the refugees, while others are merely walled shells inside which the owners erect mat sheds or temporary huts. Nearly all are unapproachable except by most precipitous footpaths. Six years ago, in the comparatively peaceful days of Manchu rule, these *chaitzu* were generally in ruins and fallen into disuse; nowadays they have mostly been repaired at a cost of many thousands of taels and have been in pretty constant use during the troubles which have afflicted these parts ever since the revolution of 1911. It is a regrettable but indisputable fact that public security in the interior of China has steadily deteriorated and that the ravages of brigands have everywhere increased during recent years since the establishment of the Republic.

487 133 Leaving Niuerhch'uan on the next day, we followed down the valley, which contracts to a gorge and is rather difficult for loaded mules, for an hour's march. Here the gorge debouches on to the valley of a considerable stream, the Shêch'uan Ho (lower down called apparently the Chia Ho), flowing like most of the rivers of Shensi from N.W. to S.E. Our path turned up the valley of this stream and followed it in a westerly direction for the rest of the way to the large market village of Fenghuangtsui, 80 li from Niuerhch'uan. The valley is hemmed in by rocky jungle-clad mountains and is uncultivated till within 15 li of Fenghuangtsui, where a tributary of equal volume from the north joins the stream. From this point on there are rice 361 fields and a succession of hamlets. Fenghuangtsui is the largest village in the district and contains many more families than Chenan itself. Apart from these occasional townships there is marked absence of villages in these mountains, and one usually travels all day long without passing anything but scattered farmsteads and huts.

487 133 The next day's march was a long and tiring one called 90 li. The trail leaves the main valley of the Shêch'uan Ho

and enters a gorge which soon ends in a stiff climb up to a 487
pass, about 5000 feet high and two hours' scramble from 133
Fenghuangtsui. There is a similar steep descent for a thousand feet or so down the other side into a ravine where farmsteads and rice fields reappear, and then a weary three hours' march down a stony gorge which debouches on to the narrow valley of the Ch'ienyu Ho, a considerable stream for these mountains, which takes its rise in the watershed ranges north of Hsiaoyi T'ing and flows south past Chenan to join the Han near Hsünyang Hsien. The trail continues down this stream, which has to be crossed and recrossed though barely fordable, for another hour's march through precipitous limestone gorges, and then turns up a small tributary to the west for a few li to reach the city of Chenan, a dilapidated little place lying hidden away in the mountains just round the corner from the canyon of the Ch'ienyu Ho.

We had had nine days' continuous travel over the most appalling mountain tracks since leaving T'ungkuan, and as we were well housed in the Yamen of the Chief of Police, and were informed that the trail on to Hsingan was much worse, we decided to rest in Chenan for a day. The fourteen days between T'ungkuan and Hsingan by this route constituted one of the hardest journeys we made in all our wanderings through Shensi and Kansu owing to the roughness of the mountain trail. Travelling as we were with the assistance of the local officials we did not have to sample the inns, if there were any, *en route*; without such assistance it would of course have been very much harder and more fatiguing.

Chenan has practically no city wall left, which is unusual. 712
The explanation lies in the fact that the inhabitants own a particularly fine *chaitzu* on a neighbouring mountain top in which they prefer to take refuge, with their magistrate and his police, in times of trouble rather than defend their
city. A large proportion of the population were there at the 574
time of our visit, for at that early period of our journey our
party was so formidable in size that when we descended 651
on these small mountain towns like a swarm of locusts the people used often to fly at our approach as though from a band of brigands. Chinese officials travelling on what used to be, and often still is, called an Imperial Mission, such as

574 that on which we were engaged, must according to immemorial custom be provided with food and accommodation
651 free of charge by the towns and villages through which they pass, and not only they themselves, but the cloud of parasites who accompany them, servants, soldiers, coolies, and animals as well. The local magistrates of course try and recoup themselves from the people, but in a very poor post they might almost be ruined by the passage of such a party.

634 There are patches of rice fields round Chenan, but most of the district is composed of a maze of wild mountains, the
651 lower slopes of which are often dotted with the valuable wood oil tree, a pretty sight in blossom in April. The Chinese assert that the district is rich in minerals, copper, iron, asbestos, and antimony. It is a third class district and the post of magistrate is of course a poor one, as the land tax receipts amount to less than a thousand taels per annum. But amongst our party was an official who had been magistrate at Hsiaoyi, a day's journey further north in the mountains, who affirmed that compared to the latter district, Chenan was a garden; for Hsiaoyi, it seems, has no land tax receipts, and practically no population. It should be explained that the land tax is usually collected in grain and remitted to the provincial treasury in silver, the process of exchange from the one into the other not being effected without a certain percentage remaining in the hands of the local official; hence the amount of the land tax is usually considered the standard by which the wealth of a post may be measured.

487 A road runs due south from Hsian, the provincial capital, through the Ch'inling Shan *via* Hsiaoyi and Chenan to Hsingan on the Han River, being the most direct route between these two important cities, but it is so rough as to be little used. It is bad enough in the dry season when it follows up and down the stream beds in the simple manner of so many mountain trails in China, but when the water rises and the path has to take to the cliffs of the gorges it is very much worse and probably quite impassable for pack animals and chairs. We found the stream bed still just practicable in April.

669 The number of burnt-out ruins of hamlets, farmsteads, and huts along the trail we had just traversed could not fail

669 rumour that many high officials were privy to the raid and shared in the loot which was brought back to Honan. It was not until they reached the Mahomedan districts of Kansu near the Kokonor border that they suffered any serious loss, and that was mainly at the hands of the Mahomedan population of those parts, who are not accustomed to permit themselves to be looted and killed without showing fight, and from the hardships of the long forced marches through that wild region, rather than owing to the action of any Government troops. Eventually the survivors straggled back with their loot through Shensi to their homes in Honan and Anhui. The Chinese officials assert that White Wolf himself, who appears to have been an ex-military officer from the Yangtzu armies, was captured and executed.

The failure of the Shensi troops, mostly revolutionary levies of Ko Lao-Hui men and ex-brigands, of much the same type as the raiders, to deal with the White Wolf rebels was to be expected; but the failure of the Northern Army opposed to them in Honan in the winter of 1913–14 seems at first sight difficult to account for. The rebels were of course much more mobile than the Government troops, as they lived on the country by taking what they wanted and impressed men and animals everywhere to carry their transport. Then again their lives being at stake, they could be depended on to fight when cornered, whereas it is difficult to induce the Chinese soldier to close with his enemy in a fight of this kind in which he has no interest. Where not an ex-brigand, the Chinese soldier is often a good fellow in most respects, but he is apt to be too sensible to be willing to run the risk of getting killed without adequate reason. Hence battles between rebels and Government troops in China usually consist in the discharge of large quantities of ammunition at a safe distance from one another. It is the civilian inhabitant of the raided towns and villages who gets killed if he does not manage to escape in time to his *chaitzu* in the mountains.

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We left Chenan on April 19th for Hsingan, distant, we were told, five hard days' march over the worst possible roads. The first stage was 80 li to the village of Ch'ingt'ung Kuan. The trail lay all the way down the steep winding gorges of the Ch'ienyu River and was terribly rough and

tiring. A path fit for carrying coolies is ledged in the cliff 487
side, but mules and ponies have to pick their way over the
stones and boulders in the stream bed, constantly crossing 133
and recrossing the river, which is only just fordable, as it washes the base of the cliffs alternately on either side. The following day's march, called 60 li, to the village of Hsiaoho K'ou is precisely the same and most tiring. The district of Hsünyang is entered rather more than half-way near a picturesque temple overhanging the water. Hsiaoho K'ou lies at a point where the river, making the most intricate turns and twists on itself and almost surrounding a precipitous hill crowned by a fine *chaitzu*, is joined by a tributary from the east.

Ten li lower down, at a hamlet called Liangho Kuan, the Ch'ienyu Ho is joined by another stream from the west called the Hsün Ho, which issues from a similar gloomy gorge in the mountains. This latter river seems to contain the greater volume of water and is considered the main stream.

From Liangho Kuan small boats can descend the Hsün 491
Ho to its junction with the Han at Hsünyang Hsien, whence the latter can be reascended to Hsingan. It was of course suggested by everyone that we should here take to boats, but as it would have taken about a week to get to Hsingan by water as against three days by road across the mountains, we decided to continue overland. Since the trail continued, however, to descend the river gorges for another 40 li, we were able to avail ourselves of boats for that distance. The magistrate of Hsünyang had provided a regular flotilla for our huge party, and the boatmen were obviously relieved to find that we were only going to take them for a short distance instead of descending to the Han; for the supply of boats was of course a sort of official corvée for which they got little or no remuneration. The best boat, a brand new one, had been laboriously dragged up the rapids of the Hsün Ho and hidden away round a bend to prevent its being impressed; but the magistrate's underlings soon got wind of it and it was unearthed together with its morose and disappointed owner, and placed at our disposal. As our mules and ponies were all tired and footsore from the rough trails they had been travelling on, I tried to ship them

491 for a rest; but having embarked them with difficulty in the largest boat, the boatmen pronounced it too dangerous a proposition in the rapids, and they had to continue their overland scramble. We had a pleasant journey downstream, passing through deep gorges and shooting a succession of small rapids, but as we ran aground periodically it took about three hours to do the 40 li to the village of Chaochia Wan, where the gorges open out into a pleasant little valley with cultivated slopes dotted with wood oil trees.

487 At Chaochia Wan the Hsingan trail leaves the gorge of the Hsün Ho to cut across the mountains to the S.W. for
133 two days' march. The first stage to the village of Map'ing Ho is only 50 li, but it is a hard day's march. It is only when one starts to climb out of these Han valley gorges that one realises their depth. For three hours after leaving Chaochia Wan we scrambled up a mountain side, most of the way too steep to ride, in a downpour of rain. On reaching the pass (about 4200 feet) the weather cleared somewhat, allowing fleeting views through the clouds over a maze of wild reddish mountains patched with trees and jungle vividly green in their spring foliage. From the pass there was a steep drop of a few li, like the ascent by slippery clay paths and flights of irregular stone steps, then an easy descent along a ridge, and finally a precipitous drop straight down the mountain side to the hamlet of Map'ing Ho lying in a ravine running S.E.

From here there was only one stage left, called 90 li, to Hsingan. The magistrate of the latter city, who met us here, suggested an early start, as the 90 li were, he said, "very big and over several mountains." Fortunately we took his advice, for what with the passes, the badness of the road, and the rain, we were nearly twelve hours *en route*.

Leaving the valley of Map'ing Ho the trail enters a defile to the S.W. which leads up to a pass (3300 feet), the boundary between Hsünyang and Hsingan districts, and then drops down into a stony gorge which is followed to the hamlet of Liuli Kou. From this place there are still 60 li left to Hsingan, and the weary traveller feels entitled to hope for a run down the valley for the rest of the way. But it is still the same story of an endless succession of ridges trending from N.W. to S.E. across a road running S.W. and

the trail only follows down this gorge for a few li before it 487
turns up the mountain to the S.W. to cross another ridge;
and descending into a similar gorge the other side, it soon 133
strikes again S.W. up another mountain slope. This, the last range to be crossed, is a stiff climb of a thousand feet by a rough zigzag track. From the summit (about 2600 feet) there is a fine view over the Han valley. Some 1800 feet below and 25 li away to the S.W. lies the city of Hsingan, with the Han River emerging from its mountain gorges, flowing past the foreground of the picture through a small plain, and disappearing in the mountains to the left; across the river rise tier on tier of hills and mountains towards the Szechuan frontier; on the right hand across a range of red hills a glimpse is caught of the valley plain of the Yo River stretching away towards Hanyin T'ing; and in the immediate foreground are low flat-topped hills of red clay, covered with wheat, peas, and lucerne, across which the path descends, climbing in and out of two deep narrow nullahs, before finally debouching at the ferry on the banks of the Han opposite Hsingan Fu.

The route followed from T'ungkuan to Hsingan, a distance of 960 li, gives one a good general idea of the nature of the ranges of mountains known to foreigners as the Ch'in-
ling Shan at their eastern and lower end. All the way one 133
is crossing ridge after ridge trending south-east composed of red sandstone, shale and limestone, the first named predominating on the lower slopes and in the valleys. These red clays and sandstones bound the loess formations on the south all the way from Honan to the Kokonor. The south-easterly trend of these ridges seems to start from the culminating point of the range, the T'aipai Shan, whence one series of ranges runs east along the southern edge of the Wei valley plains, and another strikes south-east right across the Han basin and causes the succession of gorges through which the Han River flows from below Yang Hsien to the Hupei border; between these two series of ranges lies the red plateau of Lonan and the headwaters of the Honan Lo. West of T'aipai Shan there is a similar split, one series of ranges running west into Kansu as the Yangtzu Yellow River divide, and another running south-west as the watershed between the Han and Chialing rivers. From T'aipai

438 vegetable wax, cotton, hemp, hides, bristles, edible wood
fungus, tobacco, indigo, paper, cane sugar, straw braid, etc.,
241 of which the most important is the wood oil[1], crushed out of
the seeds of an apple-like fruit ripe in the autumn. Coal,
135 iron, copper, gold, silver, antimony, and asbestos, and
perhaps other minerals, exist in the neighbourhood. As a result the basin of the upper Han is one of the most prosperous regions in the whole of China and the population one of the wealthiest. Rice is usually cheaper even than in Szechuan. But in spite of its prosperity the region is isolated and backward as regards foreign improvements, and will probably undergo a very rapid development when tapped by a railway. It is one of the anomalies of modern China that this rich well-populated region and also the productive wheat and cotton-growing prairies of the Wei River valley should still be without railway communication, though neither are really difficult to get at.

186 The population of Hsingan is somewhat rough, not over
friendly to foreigners, and strongly tainted with secret
563 society influence, and compares unfavourably with that of
Hanchung and the towns further up the valley, which have been populated by the more kindly Szechuanese. There is a considerable Mahomedan community of immigrants from Kansu, who as elsewhere keep very much to themselves.

487 The Han River is of course the main artery of com-
munication. To Hankow downstream takes one to three
133 weeks according to the state of the water, and the return
journey upstream one to two months. Steam navigation on the upper Han seems to be out of the question owing to the shallows, shifting channels, and rapids. The worst rapids, some of which are very dangerous, lie between Yang Hsien (at the lower end of the Hanchung plain) and Hsingan.

136 There is good pheasant, partridge, and wild-fowl
shooting to be had round Hsingan, and immediately to the south lies a very wild and sparsely-inhabited mountain region on the borders of Shensi, Hupei, and Szechuan, which is said to harbour all kinds of big game, such as deer, goat, pig, bear, leopard, and even the tiger.

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[1] Wood oil is nowadays one of the most important articles of the China export trade; the trees flourish on bare stony mountain sides incapable of other cultivation, and are worth studying from the point of view of afforestation generally.

The pronunciation of Hsingan on the Han River and /103 Hsian, the provincial capital in the Wei River basin, is almost identical, and as the Chinese themselves sometimes misunderstand one another when referring to them in conversation, it is rather a hopeless task for the foreigner. The two names are really Hsing-ngan and Hsi-ngan. If one wishes to make certain of being understood one should refer to Hsingan by its old name of Hsingan Chou or its new one of Ank'ang Hsien (not really new as this was always the name of the district), and to Hsian as Hsian Sheng or Ch'angan Hsien.

The American Railway Group, having secured the con- 471 cession for the construction of a certain mileage of railways in China wherever they could find room between the staked out claims of other Powers, have, according to the newspapers, elected the upper Han valley as one of the scenes of their activities, and propose, it is said, to build a line from Laoho K'ou up the valley of the Han into Shensi, and thence across the mountains into Szechuan. In view of the richness of the country it will tap, and to the fact that it is not unlikely to be the first line to solve the great problem of the railway penetration of Szechuan, the object of so many schemes, this Han Valley Railway constitutes one of the most interesting and attractive of the many railway propositions at present in contemplation in China.

We remained at Hsingan two days, during which it [132] rained incessantly. The climate of the Han valley is rather a treacherous one and fevers are common. We were now 487 bound up the Han basin to Hanchung, a distance of 650 li. The road we followed is the main highway through this region, though much of the way only a mountain footpath eighteen inches wide. Most of the traffic, however, goes by river. Like most of the roads in the Han basin it is really a [494] track for coolie porters, but mules and ponies can travel by it easily enough except for one stage along the Han River beyond Shihch'uan, which is rather dangerous for pack animals. As the main road connecting two such important places as Hsingan and Hanchung it well illustrates the extraordinarily roadless condition of China. Nor in these days of railway construction is it likely that China will ever be provided with roads as the word is understood in other civilized

487 countries. Yet a series of macadamized trunk roads would be an inestimable boon politically and economically to the country and the people and could be constructed at a comparatively small cost; some of the large sums spent annually for the upkeep of unnecessary military forces in the various provinces might with great advantage be diverted to this end.

133 [494] [241] Leaving Hsingan the Han River is crossed by a ferry above the city and the trail then runs westwards up the valley plain of the Yo River, which is navigable for small boats from Hanyin down. Its valley forms a rich little alluvial plain growing rice and wheat and supporting many farms and villages, and offering an admirable route for a railway westwards, which can thus avoid the gorges of the Han in this neighbourhood. To the south a range of mountains rises steeply to a height of a few thousand feet, separating this little plain from the Han River, while to the north the valley slopes up to low hills of red clay backed by mountains. Seventy li from Hsingan the township of Hengk'ou is reached, the end of the first stage, situated at the junction of the Yo River with the Heng River from the north. It has the honour of being the native place of the present Military Governor of the Province, General Ch'en Shu-fan, the old rule, which has many advantages, that an official is debarred from serving in his native province, no longer holding good.

487 From Hengk'ou to Hanyin is called 110 li, but the road is good and the li very short (at least four to the mile), so that with ponies and pack mules the distance can easily be done in a day. The Chinese li is commonly considered to be the equivalent of a third of a mile, which, however, is only the case in out of the way parts of Kansu. Elsewhere north of the Ch'inling Shan ten li to three miles may be taken as a fairly accurate average. In the upper Han valley, as in Szechuan, the li averages about four to a mile, or even more in the mountains; the difference north and south of the Ch'inling Shan being probably due to the use of animal and coolie transport in those regions respectively.

Ten li beyond Hengk'ou the hills close in on the river to form a *kuan*, or barrier, and the path crosses a low spur to descend again into the valley, here less than a mile in width, up which it continues past several large villages, crossing and recrossing the stream by fords, for the rest of the way to Hanyin.

Hanyin T'ing, now called Hanyin Hsien, a third class 634 district, is a prosperous little place lying at the head of the fertile Yo River valley, and, like most of the Han basin towns, is more like a Szechuan than a Shensi city.

From Hanyin to Shihch'uan Hsien is a day's march, 487 called 90 li. The path continues westwards up the narrowing 133 valley leaving the main stream which comes down from the north on the right hand. After about 15 li the valley ends [243] in low hills skilfully terraced into rice fields, up which the trail runs to reach a low divide, some 600 feet above and two hours' march from Hanyin. This is the first obstacle to a Hsingan-Hanchung railway, but from here on till it reaches the eastern end of the Hanchung plain near Yang Hsien there will be many difficulties to surmount. From the pass the track, entering the district of Shihch'uan, descends through a defile and then through terraced rice fields amongst the red clay hills to the valley of the Ch'ih Ho, a stream flowing down from the north, and reaches the township of Ch'ihho P'u, 45 li from Hanyin and at about the same elevation. The same mountain range, which is further on pierced by the Ch'ih Ho in a gorge, continues on the left hand and the same red clay hills on the right. The path continues down the valley for an hour's march, and then leaves it to climb over a spur to the north, and so into the valley of the Han, here no wider than the river bed, and flowing from north to south. For the rest of the way to Shihch'uan the trail runs up the Han along the mountain side on the left bank.

Shihch'uan, a third class Hsien, lies right on the river. [36] It is an important strategic point in these parts as the trail from Hsian across the Ch'inling Shan *via* Ningshan T'ing here debouches on to the Han and the Hsingan-Hanchung road.

The next stage to Ch'a Chen, called 80 li, is a rather dangerous one for pack animals. Crossing the Han by a [49] ferry the trail runs up the gorges of the Han, a smaller edition of those of the upper Yangtzu, being ledged in the cliff side some distance above the water. In places it is narrow and there are some corners which are difficult to negotiate; but we met with no accidents, partly because the assistance so constantly rendered to us by the local officials included repairs to bad and dangerous portions of the trail.

487 Ch'a Chen is a village on the river, already in the district of Hsihsiang, which is an extended one. Here the 133 track, leaving the river, ascends a glen to the S.W., and after reaching a height of about a thousand feet above the Han runs westwards along a mountain slope, with a steep wooded range trending east and west on the left hand, and a series of spurs with intervening glens falling away to the Han on the right. Thirty-five li from Ch'a Chen the path descends some 500 feet to a village lying in the valley of a stream which issues from a gorge in the mountains to the south and flows north towards the Han, and then continuing westwards over another of the lateral ridges descends into a maze of wooded hills and gullies, leaving the mountains to the south out of sight. After two to three hours' march through these hills the trail ascends again to emerge on the top of bare downs, whence there is a fine view over Hsihsiang and the valley plain of the Muma Ho some 500 feet below. After descending into this plain, the Hsuan Ho, issuing from a gorge in the mountains to the south, is forded, and ten li further on, after rounding a low spur separating this stream from the Muma Ho and fording the latter, the district city of Hsihsiang is reached. This is a long day's march of 100 li.

361 Hsihsiang, the capital of a second class district, lies in another of the fertile valley plains of the Han basin, that of the Muma River. This valley runs from S.W. to N.E. and is here some miles broad. To the south a rocky range of mountains rises some thousands of feet above the plain towards the Szechuan border, and to the north are bare hills separating the valley from the Han. The district is one of the wealthiest in Southern Shensi, though these compare unfavourably, in spite of their apparently greater prosperity, as regards land tax receipts with many of the Wei valley districts, such as Weinan, Lint'ung, P'uch'eng, etc., owing, it is said, to much of the newly reclaimed land in the mountains not being on the old registers. A good deal of [248 silk is produced. This Han valley silk is inferior to the 438] Szechuan product, but is good enough to send to Kansu in exchange for the skins, furs, musk, deer-horns, and medicines of that province. Hsihsiang is also noted as the home of many famous literati and officials, and we were

PLATE VIII

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TRAIL THROUGH THE FOOTHILLS NEAR KULUPA

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APPROACHING KULUPA

[Facing p. 35]

palatially lodged in the house of a former provincial 361
governor.

There are at least three roads from Hsihsiang to Hanchung, *via* Yang Hsien, Ch'engku Hsien, and Kulupa 487
respectively. We followed the latter, a three days' march.
The path runs up the Muma Ho for some 15 li, where the 133
hills close in on the river and bring the valley to an end, and then runs through the hills and along the river to the village of Matsung T'an, 50 li from Hsihsiang and, owing to a small rapid, the head of navigation for small boats on the Muma Ho, up to this point a placid stream. A little further on the trail leaves the main stream, which here flows down from the south, and turns up a small sandy tributary to the south-west, then turns west through low wooded hills intersected by rice fields, and then runs north-west up a small valley to reach the village of Shaho K'an, 25 li from Matsung T'an. This village lies, as its name implies, in a pleasant region of low sandy hills covered with small woods and intersected by rice fields much resembling Szechuan.
For some reason or other it is largely a Mahomedan com- [563]
munity with two mosques. In the woods one will often see 244
heaps of old timber, carefully stacked, for the growth of a 433
vegetable fungus called *mu erh* (wood ears), which is a much
esteemed delicacy and forms quite an important article of 262
commerce in the Han valley.

The next stage is from Shaho K'an to Kulupa, a distance 487
of 70 li. The path runs up the narrow valley of the stream,
occasionally cutting across the low wooded hills, for 30 li 133
to the village of Sunchia P'ing, where the hills open out and encircle a little rice plain. The district of Ch'engku is here entered. The country is a maze of little wooded hills intersected by gullies growing rice, and its chief feature is the sand. The hills are of soft disintegrating sandstone, the stream is a trickle of water in a sandy bed, and the path a firm sand embankment between stream and rice fields. It is evidently an old sandstone plateau cut up into hills and gullies by the action of water, like so much of Szechuan. North of the Ch'inling Shan such a country would be a desert; here with the more abundant rainfall and its resultant vegetation, it is a garden. From Sunchia P'ing the trail continues westwards for a time up the stream, and then, as

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the latter gradually comes to an end, winds through the same low hills in a northerly direction until, crossing a low divide, it emerges into more open country to reach Kulupa.

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The latter is a walled stronghold of the Catholics on the top of a hill and is the centre of Catholic missionary work in Southern Shensi, though the Bishop resides at Hanchung. The Italian Fathers who have been established in this corner of Shensi for a great many years, have attained considerable power and influence in the neighbourhood. They work on different lines to the Protestant Missions, but from their point of view with greater success. Their plan is to collect orphans or other children who are not wanted by their parents, to educate them and teach them all kinds of useful industries, and to bring them up as Catholics. This is the work that is carried on at Kulupa, where there are usually some hundreds of children being brought up as members of the Catholic Church, mostly girls, as these are easier to secure. These old-established Catholic Missions usually own a good deal of land acquired in a variety of ways, and are practically self-supporting. At Kulupa an entire hill top is covered by substantial buildings and the whole surrounded by a good wall. When trouble comes, the gates are shut, the community fetches out its arms, and the brigands, or whoever they may be, pass on to easier prey. [712]

To many Catholics the Protestant missionaries, who are usually married and live as far as possible a comfortable European family life, seem entirely out of touch with the Chinese amongst whom they are working. To many Protestants the life led by the children in such an establishment as Kulupa seems somewhat dreary, inhuman, and lacking in the comforts and interests of home life. The ideas of Catholics and Protestants in regard to Christianity and the converting of the Chinese are certainly very divergent and consequently puzzling to the latter, but they both do an enormous amount of good in different ways. The priest appears perhaps to sacrifice his life more completely to the Chinese, as he usually comes out from Europe never to return, and often lives for the rest of his days practically as a Chinese amongst the Chinese. But no missionaries of any persuasion have done more good for the Chinese people than some of the veterans of the China Inland Mission, who 797 have passed the best part of their lives in isolated stations in Shensi and Kansu, such as Hsingan, Hanchung, Fenghsiang, Lanchou, Liangchou, Hsining, and Ninghsia, where months and years pass by without their ever seeing another foreigner. Their success in securing converts may not have been striking, but it is permissible to speculate on whether those whom they have secured are not more genuine Christians than the native Catholics. Often in spite of the basest ingratitude on the part of the Chinese, whose wounds and illnesses they tend one day, only to be passed by in the street with a scowl on the next, these noble men have laboured on year after year doing good and leavening, in however small a degree, the leaden mass of Chinese materialism. The results of their work may not always be apparent now, but they have sown a seed which cannot fail in time to produce a harvest of some kind, a harvest of which other Missions not infrequently reap the benefit.

We spent the night at Kulupa, where we were most hospitably received and entertained with a banquet.

The distance to Hanchung is called 75 li. After de- 133 scending for about an hour's march through gullies in the 487 hills the track debouches on to the famous plain of Hanchung, a highly fertile, heavily cultivated, and densely populated [241 region, stretching for a certain distance along both banks 361] of the Han, and entirely surrounded by mountains. Another two hours' march across this plain, past the boundary between Ch'engku and Hanchung (Nanch'eng) districts, brings one to the Han River here a shallow stream flowing in a broad sandy bed, a hundred yards wide and a few feet deep. The path runs along the banks of the Han for a short distance, and then, crossing by a ferry, continues for [491] ten li over the plain to reach the busy township of Shihpali P'u. This village, which, as its name implies, is 18 li from Hanchung, is developing into a large town, and is evidently [438] the centre of the through trade from Szechuan, Kansu, and Northern Shensi, which, as is usually the case in China, is driven to avoid the capital by the various tolls and dues. [651] From here the road runs west for the rest of the way to Hanchung, passing through a rich suburb to reach the East Gate of the city.

361 Hanchung, now officially known by the name of the
district as Nanch'eng, is a first class Hsien, and is one of
the three or four wealthiest and most populous cities in
the province. It lies in the centre of the rich cigar-shaped
plain of the Han valley, surrounded by mountains, and in
its situation and general appearance much resembles a
243 smaller edition of Chengtu in Szechuan. Two crops, wheat
followed by rice, are regularly raised on the plain. A con-
248 siderable quantity of silk is also produced and some cotton.
The situation of Hanchung in the centre of the most fertile
region in the province and at the point of intersection of
487 four trade routes, south to Szechuan, west to Kansu, north
438 to the Wei valley, and east down the Han to the coast,
has made it a considerable trade centre. For the same reason
651 it has always been one of the richest and most important
likin stations in the province, where the Chinese officials,
as elsewhere, do their best to throttle the transit trade and
kill the goose which lays the golden eggs by the excessive
imposition of dues and tolls. There are few more lucrative
offices in the province than that of Superintendent of the
Hanchung Likin.

631 Hanchung is the administrative capital of the upper Han basin, and is the seat of a Taoyin and a Chenshoushih. The position of the former is that of Civil Superintendent of the magistrates in his jurisdiction. It is nowadays less important than it was in the days of the Manchus. Since the abolition of the hierarchical system of Tao, Fu, Chou, and Hsien, the territorial administration is entirely in the hands of the district magistrates acting directly under the Civil Governor of the province. Thus the magistrates correspond directly with the Governor and send copies of their despatches and reports to the Taoyin, so that the latter is short-circuited and the abolition of the post is sometimes advocated as being superfluous. Under the old system the Hsien reported to the Chou, the Chou to the Fu, the Fu to the Tao, and the Tao to the Governor, each being responsible for the acts of his subordinate. The position of Chenshoushih is that of a General with powers of military administration. At the present time, when things are more or less unsettled and the military rule the roost, a Chenshoushih often has powers which amount practically to those of an independent

CHAPTER IV

FROM HANCHUNG IN THE HAN VALLEY ACROSS THE CENTRAL CH'INLING SHAN TO FENGHSIANG IN THE WEI BASIN

Routes across the Ch'inling Shan—Ch'engku—Yanghsien—Across the parallel ridges of the Ch'inling Shan—Big game—The Hsinglung Ling—Fop'ing—Pheasant shooting—More passes—Chouchih—Across the Wei valley plains to Meihsien and Fenghsiang—Wheat, indigo, and cotton.

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FROM Hanchung it was our intention to re-cross the Ch'inling Shan back into the Wei valley. The Ch'inling Shan, or Nan Shan, which consist of a series of precipitous parallel ranges trending across the path of anyone travelling between south and north, have always proved an extraordinarily effective barrier to communication between the Han and Wei basins. It was this barrier which prevented the T'aip'ing Rebellion spreading north from the Han valley into Central Shensi, and the Mahomedan Rebellion spreading south from the Wei valley into Southern Shensi; and in recent years it has kept the upper Han basin comparatively peaceful while rebellion and brigandage raged in the Wei valley and Northern Shensi. The Chinese have always rested content with two main routes across this barrier, one at each end; the Hsian-Lungchuchai road in the east, and the Fenghsiang-Liupa-Hanchung road in the extreme west. There is one other route which is considered by Chinese travellers to be just passable, that south from Hsian *via* Ningshan T'ing. The remaining three routes, that in the east *via* Chenan, that in the centre *via* Fop'ing, and that, further west, south from Mei Hsien, the two latter passing over the shoulders of the T'aipai Shan, one on each side, are considered by the Chinese impracticable for ordinary travellers. This is because they are too steep for chairs, and are so rough that even with mules and ponies it is necessary to do the greater portion of the journey on foot. We returned to the Wei valley by the Fop'ing trail, which debouches on to the plain at Chouchih Hsien, whence we turned westwards to Fenghsiang Fu. From Hanchung to Fenghsiang by this route is a distance of about 840 li.

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For the first two days from Hanchung the road runs down the valley plain past the district city of Ch'engku Hsien to Yang Hsien, two easy stages of 75 and 60 li respectively. These are two large and flourishing cities, Ch'engku especially rivalling even Hanchung in the wealth and prosperity of its inhabitants. Below Yang Hsien the converging mountains bring this fertile plain to an end and the Han River enters a series of gloomy gorges interrupted by rapids from which it emerges at Hsingan. The latter city is supposed to be about 800 feet only above sea level, whereas Hanchung is credited on some of the best modern maps of China with a height of 2000 feet, thus allowing of a fall of some 1200 feet in the Han between Yang Hsien and Hsingan. As the fall on this portion of the river can hardly be more than 500 feet, Hanchung is probably not more than some 1300 feet above sea level.

The difficulties of this route begin on leaving Yang Hsien. The trail here turns north and reaches the base of the mountains after about 8 li. After following a small valley for a short distance, it leaves the stream and ascends over cultivated downs to reach the edge of a spur between two ravines. There is a steep scramble up this ridge for two hours or more by a very rough rocky track to the top of the first range bounding the valley. The view from this ridge looking north is over a series of steep sparsely timbered ranges, rising one behind the other and blocking the way to Fop'ing. From the pass (4400 feet) there is a steep drop into a winding gorge which debouches after an hour's march into the ravine of a stream flowing S.E.; a short distance up this ravine lies an inn, called Ta Tientzu, 65 li from Yang Hsien, which makes a suitable halting-place for the first stage.

From Ta Tientzu the trail continues up the ravine to the north, past the hamlet of Hohsiatzu, for 35 li to the foot of another range running east and west. There is a stiff climb of about a thousand feet to the pass (5500 feet), followed by a precipitous drop of as much down the other side into a ravine which leads straight down to the unwalled township of Huayang Chen, lying in a basin of sandstone at the junction of several ravines which provide water and space for rice fields, the last seen until the descent into the Wei valley five days further north. The surrounding mountains are

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much broken, prettily wooded, and full of pheasants. To the north a high range runs east and west across the direction of Fop'ing, while to the south-east there is a large gap in the mountains following the flow of the stream. This stage is also about 65 li.

The trail now continues north up a boulder-strewn valley which soon contracts to a gorge, and then turns up a side glen which leads after a scramble to the pass (6000 feet), two to three hours' march from Huayang. This ridge is the boundary between the districts of Yang Hsien and Fop'ing Hsien and the magistrate of the latter had left his isolated post in the wilds of the Ch'inling Shan to meet us here. There is a fine view to the north over two high rocky ranges running east and west, the further one rising to a height of over 10,000 feet. From the pass the track drops steeply into the gorge of a stream flowing west, where there are some huts called Hot'ao Pa. Crossing the stream the path strikes almost immediately into another glen, which leads up through dense thickets of the dwarf-bamboo to the top of the nearest of the two ranges seen from the last pass. From the summit there are fine views all around over the mountains densely wooded with pine, birch, and other trees; to the north the same high range still blocks the road to Fop'ing. From this pass (7000 feet) there is a precipitous drop of a few hundred feet into the gorge of another stream flowing S.W., up which the trail turns northwards for a few li to reach some huts and a mule inn called Ta P'ing, with a little cultivation, mostly potatoes. We halted here for the night, 60 li from Huayang. This is a tiring march, practically one long scramble up and down the mountains all the way, by very bad tracks much too rough to ride over. The second pass can be avoided by taking an alternative route down one stream and up the other, which is said, however, to be impassable for mules.

Ta P'ing is nearly 7000 feet high, Huayang Chen about 4000, Ta Tientzu about 3000, and Yang Hsien about 1300. The trail thus ascends by a series of steps from valley to valley across the intervening ranges from the Han River to the heart of the Ch'inling Shan.

On the following day's march the trail continues up the stream to the ~~N.E.~~ through forests of pine and birch for about 15 li to reach the pass in the big range. The ascent is comparatively easy except for the last few hundred feet, the valley being flat and open and apparently of glacier origin in contrast to the deep narrow gorges usual in the Ch'inling Shan. A little snow and ice were still lying in the stream bed in the middle of May. From the summit of the pass (9000 feet) there is a fine view to the north towards T'aipai Shan (12,000 feet), which appears as a rocky ridge sprinkled with snow, with a lower range in the immediate foreground over which the path leads to Fop'ing. All around are forest-clad ranges, uninhabited, and abounding in big game, deer, bear, pig, leopard, goral, and takin; but owing to the nature of the country their pursuit would involve great difficulties and hardships. This is near the heart of the Ch'inling Shan, a wild unexplored region, whence the ranges and streams ramify east and south-east on one side, and west and south-west on the other. The pass is called the Hsinglung Ling, and is crowned with an old ruined temple and gateway. There are additional signs that this trail, now unused except by a few isolated coolies carrying salt into the Han valley, smugglers, and others with good reasons for avoiding the main road, was once a much more important route. It is of course the most direct road from Hsian to Hanchung.

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From the pass there is an easy descent through another flat open valley, where we saw some silver pheasants (or perhaps they should be referred to as blood pheasants, a species of *Ithagenes*), into the valley of a stream flowing west, where there is some cultivation, as usual mostly potatoes, and some huts, called Huangts'ao P'ing; these valleys are less thickly wooded than those on the southern side of the pass. Here the trail leaves the stream at once and strikes up the opposite slope to the north to reach another pass after an hour's easy climb. This range is the last to be crossed before reaching Fop'ing and is a few hundred feet lower than the Hsinglung Ling. From the pass there is a steep descent by a very rough track through a narrow gorge until one debouches after about 25 li into the broad cultivated valley of the Fop'ing River, up which the road runs eastwards through corn fields swarming with pheasants for ten li to Fop'ing T'ing.

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of the North West and must consume a great deal of grain. 136
Strangely enough the Chinese peasants, often poor to the verge of starvation, seldom touch them,[1] partly because of 262
the cost of powder and shot, and partly perhaps because of 136
the curious prejudice the Chinese cultivator has to eating anything wild, for fear lest it should make him "wild in the 825
heart." The ordinary Chinese appear much to prefer a skinny old chicken to a nice plump pheasant because the former is not wild. While we were routing out pheasants on these hills we put up four deer, apparently a large kind of roe, which showed very little alarm and kept on reappearing at intervals for the rest of the afternoon.

The T'ing, usually translated "sub-prefecture" and now 634
abolished, appears formerly to have been always the centre of a sort of military district located in mountainous country 563
for the purpose of holding aboriginal tribesmen of some kind in check. Thus one will find many T'ing on the western confines of Yunnan, Szechuan, and Kansu facing the Tibetans; in the Miaotzu country of Kueichou and adjacent provinces; on the borders of Lololand in Szechuan; on the Burma-Yunnan frontier; and in Northern Shensi on the Mongolian border; but not in provinces like Anhui, Kiangsu, Shantung, etc., which have never contained a non-Chinese population. There are quite a number of T'ing in the Nan Shan of Shensi. But every vestige of an aboriginal non-Chinese population seems to have disappeared, if it ever existed. I have a vague recollection that some European scholar has evolved a theory that the non-Chinese tribes now living in Southern China originated in the mountains of Southern Shensi. Incidentally it may be noted that the former T'ing are usually marked in foreign maps of China as more important places than the Hsien. But with the exception of a few larger places such as Tachienlu and T'engyueh, nine out of ten of the T'ing are miserable little walled villages in the mountains, nowadays ranking as the poorest of third class Hsien.

Leaving Fop'ing the track climbs up the range im- 487
mediately to the north by zigzags to reach the pass about a thousand feet above the valley, whence there is a fine 133
view over a wilderness of mountains all around. To the N. and N.W. lies T'aipai Shan, a bare rocky ridge still carrying a good deal of snow in May. This pass (about 7000 feet) is

[1] [pheasants - Analyst]

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the watershed between the Yangtzu and Yellow River basins, the streams to the north all flowing down into a river called the Hei Ho, which rises in Fop'ing district and flows through the mountains to join the Wei near Chouchih Hsien. The trail to the latter place, however, does not follow down the gorges of this stream, but passes directly N.E. over a series of spurs running down from T'aipai Shan, and is little if at all less arduous than the portion between Yang Hsien and Fop'ing.

From the pass the path drops steeply through a pine wood into a densely wooded gorge running east. After an hour's march down this ravine the stream is joined by one of greater volume flowing down from the snows of T'aipai Shan. The scenery in this neighbourhood is exceedingly beautiful, the torrent descending in a succession of cascades through a gorge hemmed in by densely wooded heights. Continuing down this winding ravine for another hour's march, the village of Houchentzu is reached, where the valley opens out and there is some cultivation. Here the path leaves the stream, which flows off towards the east to join the Hei Ho, and strikes up a gully which leads after a steep ascent to a pass over a ridge some 1500 feet above Houchentzu, whence it drops precipitously into the cultivated valley of another stream flowing down from T'aipai, and reaches the village of Taima Ho, at about the same elevation as Houchentzu (4500 feet) and 60 li from Fop'ing. This was another hard march, scrambling up and down mountains all day; but the scenery was so fine and the air so bracing that no one seemed too tired, though to be compelled to walk the best part of 60 li in the mountains is not unnaturally considered a terrible hardship by the Chinese upper classes; although these latter appear so utterly unused and averse to all forms of bodily exercise there is yet a curious reserve of strength and of capacity for suffering hardship about them which was frequently noticeable on our long journeys. 486 Our party was now much reduced in size, but it severely taxed the accommodation of these mountain inns and hamlets. Local supplies would of course have been quite inadequate, but large quantities of rice or flour and a few rough tents were always arranged for at our halts by the local officials.

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At Taima Ho the track again leaves the stream, which flows east into a deep gorge towards the Hei Ho, and turns northwards up the mountain side to gain a pass over a ridge some 1500 feet above the valley. The ascent is easy, this spur being covered with a sort of clayey loess cultivated in terraces; the appearance of loess so far in the Ch'inling ranges is unusual. From the pass the track drops into the gorge of another stream flowing down from T'aipai Shan; it follows up this gorge for a few li past the hamlet of Ch'enk'ou Wan and then turns up a side ravine to reach the base of a ridge called the Laochün Ling. From here there is a stiff climb for two to three hours, ascending 2500 feet, up a wooded mountain side to reach the pass (7500 feet), T'aipai Shan again becoming visible at intervals. From the summit there is a fine view to the S.W. across the lower ridges traversed by the trail back to the watershed range north of Fop'ing. After a steep drop of 2000 feet through a gorge Watientzu is reached, a few huts and inns, surrounded by precipitous mountains, in the ravine of a stream flowing down from T'aipai. This is another tiring march of 60 li. One is here in the district of Chouchih, the Laochün Ling ridge being the Fop'ing boundary.

From Watientzu the path runs down the narrow wooded gorge for about two hours' march, and then turns north up a gully which leads after a steep climb of 2000 feet to the summit of another ridge trending S.E. This is the last of the eleven passes which have to be crossed on this trail between the Han and Wei valleys. From the northern face of the range there is a very fine view over the Wei valley plain nearly five thousand feet below. From the pass the track descends by steep zigzags and then through a narrow gorge for three hours' march to reach the village of Hsink'outzu, lying a little above the plain at the base of the mountains, 80 li from Watientzu. The whole party heaved sighs of relief to find themselves once more on level ground; for the mountains with their fine scenery and bracing air are lost on the Chinese, who only notice the discomforts and hardships they entail for the traveller. The majority 500
of our large party had by this time had enough of the journey, and produced various excuses for returning to the provincial capital, two and a half days' march across the

006 plain. The excuses were unnecessary, as we had throughout
raised objections to the size of the party. Carts, which we
493 had not seen since leaving T'ungkuan, were sent to meet us
here in case anyone should want them, and the prospect of
a return to Hsian reclining in a cart, after scrambling up
and down the mountains on foot for so many days, was as
attractive to them as a passage in a train *de luxe* would be
to a travel-worn European. To me a journey in a Chinese
cart is a hideously uncomfortable method of travel, unless it
be across absolutely smooth Mongolian grass lands. A Chinese
cart travels along a Chinese paved road with a series of bumps
sounding like gunshots, which rapidly reduce a European to
pulp, but apparently have no effect on a Chinese.

From Hsink'outzu to Chouchih Hsien, a distance of 30 li,
the track descends across an undulating plain, which in
spring is one vast wheat-field dotted with hamlets and the
walled farms peculiar to the Shensi plains. Chouchih, a
[361] first class Hsien city and the centre of one of the rich
agricultural districts of the Wei valley, lies a few li to the
south of the Wei River. It is a regular northern city compared
to the crowded little towns of the Han valley, and
consists of little more than one long dusty street, open and
[241] empty looking. Wheat and cotton are the staples; a little
coarse silk is produced, the cocoon season being in full
[231] swing at the time of our visit during the latter half of May.
The two characters for Chouchih are rather unusual ones,
and mean "the winding of mountain streams," which
appears to refer to the Hei Ho and its tributaries which
flow down from Fop'ing and T'aipai Shan through deep
winding gorges to the plains. The district, like all those of
Central Shensi, is a very ancient one, dating back to the
beginnings of Chinese history. We were as usual quartered
in the magistrate's yamen, which happened to be in an
unusually good state of repair and provided most comfortable
175 accommodation. A study of the archives of these
district yamens of Central Shensi would doubtless prove
of great interest to the historian, since, where they have
not been destroyed during the revolution or the White
Wolf rebellion, they date back to very ancient days.

487 From Chouchih we turned westwards and travelled
across the plain to Mei Hsien, a distance of 100 li. The

road, here a good cart track, runs across an undulating 487 wheat prairie, dotted with hamlets and walled farms, with 243 the Wei River out of sight on the right hand, and the great barrier of the Ch'inling mountains on the left. Three townships [36] are passed, Yapei, Hengch'u, and Huaiya, the second being of some interest as the home of a famous Sung Dynasty philosopher. The amount of wheat grown on these plains 262 of Central Shensi is very great, especially nowadays since the suppression of opium cultivation. There is no better [74] wheat flour in China than that of Shensi, and it forms the staple food of the population, eaten in the form of bread (*mo*) and macaroni (*kua mien*). With this excellent wheat flour, good mutton, and plenty of game in the mountains, the foreign traveller is well off as regards food. A sound rule for travel in the interior of China is to avoid all tinned foods and rely on native supplies cooked in foreign style; the former only increase one's baggage loads and are quite unnecessary; native food made up in the native style is unappetising to most foreigners as well as being dangerously dirty.

Mei Hsien, a second class district city, is a small place, but like Chouchih is the centre of a rich agricultural region 241 comprising the plain between the Ch'inling Shan and the River Wei. The latter flows a few li to the north of the town. The city has suffered greatly from rebellions and brigandage during recent years.

From Mei Hsien to Fenghsiang Fu is called 110 li, but 497 the road being good and mostly level, the distance can be covered in one long march. The Wei River, in the dry [41] season a thick yellow stream a hundred yards wide and few feet deep, is crossed by a ferry and the road then runs westwards with the river on the left hand and a loess bluff on the right for 35 li to the village of Ts'aichia P'o. At the 249 time of our visit this low-lying land was almost entirely devoted to indigo and dotted with the peculiar-looking 386 brick pits in which the plants are mashed in preparing the dye. This is an old industry revived on account of the scarcity of aniline dyes. The indigo forms a useful rotation crop for the relief of the land exhausted by the everlasting wheat. We saw little else but wheat, cotton, and indigo during our tour of the loess of Central Shensi, growing on

T.T. the uplands, river plains, and irrigated lands respectively.

000 the uplands, river plains, and irrigated lands respectively.
Leaving Ts'aichia P'o the road climbs the loess bluff to
133 the north, emerging on an undulating plain 500 feet above
487 the river, this being about the usual thickness of the loess
243 deposits in Western Shensi, and then runs N.E. across
361 wheat-growing prairies, past numerous hamlets and walled
farms, ascending gradually to reach Fenghsiang Fu.

Fenghsiang Fu, now a first class Hsien, lies at the western
361 end of the open Wei valley, where the mountains of the
Kansu border meet the Ch'inling Shan and bring these
fertile loess plains to an end. It is a large city and used to
be quite an important place, but its commercial prosperity,
destroyed during the rebellions and other troubles of the
past six years, has not yet revived. The inhabitants have
a bad reputation, and, like the town of Paochi on the Wei
River a day's journey to the south, it has in the past been
[491] a hotbed of the Ko Lao Hui. Its position near the junction
of the Ch'in Chou road into Kansu and the high road to
Szechuan gives it some importance, and cart tracks radiate
from it across the plain in all directions, ceasing abruptly at
the foot of the mountains.

CHAPTER V

FROM FENGHSIANG THROUGH THE LOESS OF WESTERN SHENSI TO YENAN

The loess plateau of Western Shensi—Linyu—Yungshou—Ch'unhua—Wheat harvest—Rifts in the loess—Yaochou—Origin of loess—Brigands of North Shensi—T'ungkuan—Yichün—Game in the mountains—Chungpu—Loch'uan—Fuchou—Ravages of brigands—Kanch'uan—Caves—Yenan.

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AFTER a couple of days' rest at Fenghsiang we started on a long tour of the loess country of Northern Shensi, the furthest point of which was to be Yenan Fu. There being nothing in the nature of a main road in that direction from where we found ourselves, and being met with the usual protestations to that effect, we had to apply, as usual with success, the plan of proceeding from one district city to another in the required direction, until we struck the highway from Hsian to Yenan at Yao Chou. Between Fenghsiang and Yao Chou our route took us across a vast plateau of loess, which includes parts or the whole of the districts of Pin Chou, Ch'angwu, Sanshui, Yungshou, and Ch'unhua, and reaches in the N.W. a height of over 4000 feet. It has a marked slope to the S.E. and is intersected by the deep cañon of the Ching River and the ravines of many other streams all flowing in the same direction, and by innumerable rifts and crevasses in the loess from ten to five hundred feet in depth. Travel up and down this plateau along its slope between N.W. and S.E. is easy, but transversely from S.W. to N.E., the line of our march, most trying and arduous, owing to the necessity of constantly crossing the perpendicular rifts in the loess, varying from the tremendous cañon of the Ching River, nearly a thousand feet in depth, to a dry crevasse a hundred feet deep. All these rifts trend in the same direction as the slope of the plateau, i.e. S.E., and all have perpendicular walls. In order to avoid these rifts which increase in size and frequency as the plateau descends, our route kept as much as possible to the high ground and consequently made a long detour to the north.

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487 From Fenghsiang to Yao Chou by this route is a distance of about 510 li, and thence to Yenan another 530 li.

133 Leaving Fenghsiang Fu by the East Gate the trail soon turns off the main road to the N.E. and runs across the plain for 20 li to the foot of the hills. Crossing a spur a few hundred feet high the path then descends into the ravine of a stream which is followed up for two hours' march to the hamlet of K'angchia Ho. The surrounding mountains are all of loess terraced for the cultivation of wheat and maize, [243] with the scattered inhabitants living mostly in caves. In this neighbourhood we came across some chikor of exception- 136 ally large size (the handsome red-legged partridge of North China), the only occasion on which I have seen them in the loess. These birds are called *Shih Chi* (stone fowl) in the mountains of Northern Chihli, where they are common, frequenting bare stony slopes. They are found in large coveys, which seldom fail to make their presence known by their characteristic call; but they are most difficult to shoot, as they are inveterate runners, always up hill, and, being very strong, carry a great deal of shot; the only way to get them is to descend on them from above. They are excellent eating, but not so good as the little brown partridge with a black patch on the breast, also fairly common in the mountains of the North. Throughout our journeys in Shensi and Kansu, however, we saw very few partridges compared to pheasants.

487 From K'angchia Ho the trail runs up a branch of the stream to the N.E. for a few li and then strikes up the hill 133 side, and following a ridge between two ravines ascends gradually to reach a pass (4300 feet), the boundary between Fenghsiang and Linyu districts. There is much uncultivated land on these mountains, the grass-grown terraces gradually becoming obliterated; this is a common sight throughout Northern Shensi and Kansu, and together with the many ruined villages points to a decrease in population, supposed to be due to the ravages of the great Mahomedan rebellion of fifty years ago, but perhaps also due to a gradual desiccation of this region. All around are loess ridges and ravines in bewildering confusion; but there appears to be a sort of watershed trending S.E., a range which is known further east as the Ch'i Shan. From the pass there is no immediate

descent, the path following along [illegible] winding ridge, and then 487
dropping into the valley of a streamlet, which leads after 133
an hour's march to the hamlet of Liangshê, 80 li from
Fenghsiang, where we stopped the night. On the following
day an easy march of 40 li down the valley, through cornfields
full of pheasants, brought us to Linyu Hsien. The 634
latter is a tiny city, the centre of a miserably poor third
class district, lost in the brigand-infested loess mountains [579]
not far from the Kansu border. It is an isolated little place,
lying on an unfrequented mule trail into Kansu *via* Lingt'ai.
The magistrate, an intelligent young man of the student class, led a lonely and somewhat miserable existence, apart from the danger from brigands, and admitted that he only looked upon this, his first appointment, as a stepping-stone to something better. Most of the many magistrates we met took but little interest in their work, regarding their posts either as a necessary evil to be endured for a short time as a stepping-stone to something better, or as a means of getting rich quick. And yet their work of administration is really most interesting and affords many opportunities of improving the lot of the people. But they can hardly be blamed for taking so little interest in their districts in view of the present system under which they may at any moment have to make way for another place-hunter. Thus it often happened that we came across magistrates who, never leaving their dilapidated little yamens, had only the vaguest knowledge of the geography and inhabitants of their districts.

Life in Linyu city, as in countless other little Hsiens 361
buried in the interior of China, is that of the middle ages, 579
and the appearance of its streets and walls, with ancient cannon and gingals and heaps of stones all ready to hurl on the heads of an attacking force of brigands, has probably changed but little for hundreds of years. Revolutions, rebellions, and battles in the plains below, in which the contending forces pump lead at one another with modern rifles and machine guns, have little effect in these isolated hills, except that the brigands become more and more formidable from year to year.

Linyu lies on a loess bluff overlooking the junction of 487
two streams from the west and north, flowing in beds of
shale and sandstone at the bottom of deep narrow valleys 133

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in the loess hills. The path, crossing the northern branch, strikes up the hill side between two ravines and emerges on to a wheat covered plateau intersected by rifts and valleys in the loess. It runs across this plateau in a northerly direction, ascending gradually, for a couple of hours, and then, as the cañons on either side close in and the plateau narrows to a spur, it follows along the top of the latter, still ascending, for another hour to reach the village of Tsuimu, 4800 feet, perched up on a ridge with the ground falling away in deep cañons all around, and 40 li from Linyu. [252] Supplies were very scanty in these hills, as the people are miserably poor; but a little wheat flour could usually be obtained, which was good where not mixed with too much loess in the process of threshing and grinding. Cock pheasants could generally be secured out of the corn fields when required.

It is an agreeable peculiarity of loess mountain country that the trails follow where possible along spurs and ridges rather than the valleys (this is so, in spite of a famous and much quoted description of the loess in which the life and traffic of the region is described as moving along the bottoms [651] of the cañons), and Tsuimu lies on a sort of knot, where several ridges and therefore mule trails meet; consequently, though only a dot of a place, it boasts a likin station, and commands two trails into Kansu. The path to Yungshou Hsien, 50 li, follows along the top of one of these winding ridges, this one being actually the summit of a range which runs eastwards from the Kansu border and constitutes the first barrier crossed by the Great West Road between Hsian and Lanchou, and provides a most interesting march owing to the continuous and extensive views on either side over this peculiar loess country. To the south a series of loess spurs and intervening ravines fall away steeply towards the Linyu valley, beyond which the Ch'i Shan range is seen to end, as Yungshou is approached, in the rolling plains of the Wei River and its tributaries; while to the north, across an intervening dip, rises like a wall the edge of the loess plateau country of Eastern Kansu. These loess clad ridges of Western Shensi seem to be pieces broken off from the Kansu plateau, like the mountains on the edge of the Mongolian plateau, south of Dolonor in Northern Chihli.

Where the loess has been washed away shales and sandstones 487 are revealed, and often right on the tops of the spurs there are outcroppings of a sort of conglomerate of waterworn 133 pebbles cemented together. The loess mountains in this [233] neighbourhood are little cultivated, being covered with poor-looking pasture, which supports scanty herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. Finally there is a descent of a few hundred feet to reach the city of Yungshou Hsien, which lies a little below the crest of the ridge, on the shoulder of a spur up which ascends the Great West Road from the Hsian plains.

Yungshou consists of one street running up the ridge 361 and is merely a walled-in section of the big road; it is a replica of Linyu, with a little more life in it owing to its position on the Kansu highway. We had passed through it two years previously almost to a day on our way to the latter province, the season of the year being the end of May.

Our next objective was the district city of Ch'unhua 487 (locally Shunhua) distant two marches of 90 li each. Leaving 133 Yungshou we followed up the main road for a few li to regain the crest of the range, where I shot some cock pheasants in almost the identical spot as two years before, and then turned eastwards once more along the top of the ridge for 25 li to a cave village. Here the ridge ends in rolling uplands of loess, the beginning, from this side, of the great loess plateau of Western Shensi. The Belgian railway (Lung Hai) from Hsian to Lanchou will, it is said, follow up the Wei River, the line of the cart road being apparently too difficult; an easier route might perhaps be found following up the slope of this plateau through Sanshui district to Ch'ingyang, and thence through Northern [233] Kansu. The upper portions of these rolling plains where we met them are uncultivated and covered with poor sheep pasture, apparently owing to the lack of water, the one great drawback to the loess; and one might imagine oneself on the grasslands of Eastern Mongolia, until, on attempting to cross the plateau in any direction away from the trail, one almost immediately fetches up against a chasm in the loess with perpendicular walls perhaps hundreds of feet deep. Lower down these uplands are one vast cornfield

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through which the path descends to reach the township of Ch'angning Chen, winding to and fro to avoid the rifts, the heads of ravines and valleys breaking away south and south-east.

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The harvest time on these immense wheat prairies which was now approaching is a period of intense activity. The crops are of course gathered entirely by hand, and large numbers of labourers from Kansu, groups of whom we were constantly meeting, come down to assist; after the harvest is over in the Wei valley plains they work back across the plateau of Western Shensi to their native highlands, harvesting as they go. 438 In good years there must be a large surplus of wheat in Shensi and Kansu available for export; but in the absence of waterways and railways the means of communication are so bad that it would be impossible to move the harvests to any distance.

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From Ch'angning the path runs in a northerly direction across the plateau, winding about to avoid the impassable rifts, for about 20 li, where it reaches the Ching River, flowing in a deep narrow cañon some 800 feet deep. There is a steep descent into this gorge, and the Ching River, an unfordable torrent of liquid mud, is crossed by a ferry. This cañon exposes clearly the depth of the loess covering, some five or six hundred feet, the stream having carved itself a bed still deeper down in the underlying rock. The track climbs out of the gorge to the top of the plateau a similar height on the further side, and then runs across the undulating uplands for 15 li to the village of Kao Ts'un in the district of Pin Chou, 90 li from Yungshou. This is a tiring march, including the passage of the Ching Ho, for on the small roads of Northern Shensi the li are apt to be very long.

From Kao Ts'un the track continues N.E. for another 30 li to the village of T'u Ch'iao (4400 feet), in the district of Sanshui, now called Hsünyi Hsien, the highest and most northerly point on the plateau reached between Yungshou and Ch'unhua, whence it runs S.E., descending gradually with the slope of the land, for 45 li, to the large village of T'ungshen Kou. So far the trail by keeping to the north had avoided the crevasses in the loess, but as soon as one turned S.E. they began to be met. Thus between T'u Ch'iao and T'ungshen Kou three streamlets flowing in deep rifts in the loess have to be crossed, the last named place lying on the further edge of the third. The passage of each rift means a precipitous climb down into the gorge of 500 feet or more and a similar ascent the other side (this being the thickness of the loess covering); at the bottom there is usually a streamlet flowing in a rocky bed underneath the loess. The constant crossing of these rifts (called *kou* by the Chinese) was most trying in the dry heat of early June, and at midday the temperature at the bottom of the *kou* was sometimes terrific. Water is very scarce in loess country, and apt to be brackish, and the streamlets at the bottom of the rifts are their only redeeming feature from the traveller's point of view. The passage of these rifts was a constant and arduous feature of our daily marches from now on until we had completed our tour of Northern Shensi. Sometimes marching towards a village after a long day the weary traveller sees his destination apparently only a few hundred yards away, only to find that it is separated from him by a *kou* 500 feet deep which takes at least an hour to cross. From T'ungshen Kou the track continues S.E. across the sloping plateau for 20 li, descending steeply for the last mile or so, to reach Ch'unhua Hsien, a poor little third class district city, lying in a sort of basin formed by the junction of several valleys and rifts in the loess some distance below the level of the plateau. To the south the loess rises steeply to a low rocky range separating the Ch'unhua valley from the Ching Ho.

From Ch'unhua to Yao Chou is a distance of 115 li, two short marches. The trail climbs out of the valley to the level of the plateau a few hundred feet above and continues eastwards, keeping to the high ground and winding round the heads of several rifts in the loess. After two to three hours' march the cañon of a streamlet flowing south is crossed by the usual zigzag descent and ascent, and another hour brings one to the village of Fangli Chen, 40 li from Ch'unhua. Thirty li further on the village of Hsiaoch'u is reached, after crossing two more huge rifts, with streams flowing as usual S. and S.E. The passage of these cañons is the exact inverse of crossing a pass of equal height; instead of the summit of a ridge with the view and breeze to refresh one there is the airless sweltering heat of the bottom of the

487 133 *kou*. Again referring to the well-known description of the loess which depicts the life and traffic of the region as moving unseen along the bottoms of the rifts, the converse holds good on these table lands of Western Shensi, the villages, farms, and roads lying on the top of the plateau, and the bottoms of the cañons being often lifeless. From Hsiaoch'u the track runs eastwards over the plateau, crossing two more rifts *en route*, for four hours' march to reach Yao Chou, lying in a valley at the junction of two streams flowing south.

133 The region traversed on this route between Yungshou and Yao Chou must be one of the best examples in the world of a pure loess plateau. It is dotted with low mountain outcroppings, and travelling across it one is strongly impressed with its resemblance to a series of old lake basins which have been drained off to the south-east. The loess soil, a sort of very fine sandy loam, which covers almost the whole of North Western China north of the Ch'inling Shan to a depth of many hundreds of feet, is supposed to have been deposited as the result of the dust storms of countless ages from the Gobi deserts of Mongolia combined with the decomposition of vegetable matter. The longer we travelled in the loess country the more difficult it seemed to credit this theory. The Chinese take it for granted that these wonderful deposits of *Huang T'u* (yellow earth, as they call it) were caused by water, that is to say by the great floods which according to their historical records once submerged N.W. China at about the same period as those recorded in the Bible. For anyone well acquainted with the country it requires but little effort to imagine these turgid floods of yellow waters washing the base of the Ch'inling Shan as they poured down from the N.W., and depositing the loess, even as its redeposit may nowadays be watched on the banks of the Yellow River between Ninghsia and Paot'ou. The configuration of the Wei basin in Shensi is exactly that of the bed of a huge river washing the base of a rocky cliff on its southern bank and sloping up in shallows towards the north. Further, in every rift or ravine, which is cut down through the loess to the underlying shale or sandstone, a layer of mixed loess and water-worn pebbles is almost invariably exposed

579 and levy blackmail on the villages. The north of Shensi on the other hand was at the time of our visit in the hands of organized troops of brigands of a semi-political character, robbers one day, rebels the next, and perhaps successful revolutionaries the next.

487 At Yao Chou we struck the main trail from Hsian Fu to Yenan, Suitê, Yülin, and the north of the province generally;
491 with the exception of the little known and seldom used track by which we returned it is the only trail connecting Central and Northern Shensi. As far as Yenan and Yench'ang it is passable for carts, having been constructed at considerable cost for the transport of the Japanese oil-drilling machinery to Yench'ang in 1906, and again repaired by the Americans during their oil-drilling venture eight years later. This road might at comparatively small cost be made passable for motor traffic, and had the American enterprise succeeded would doubtless long since have been made so. As it is, it nowadays leads into a depopulated, brigand-infested region where there is no trade and traffic, and is gradually reverting to the condition of an ordinary Chinese trail. But it is an example of the ease with which a comparatively good cart track can be constructed through mountainous country, where, without the stimulus of a foreign interest, the Chinese would for ever remain content with the usual villainous mule trail.

487 The first stage from Yao Chou is a short one, called 60 li,
133 to T'ungkuan Hsien, and lies up the valley to the N.E., which, except at one point about half-way where it contracts into
361 a gorge, is cultivated and bounded by low hills of loess. T'ungkuan is a little third class district city lying at the foot of the first of the mountain ranges which cross Northern Shensi from N.W. to S.E.

The next day's march is from T'ungkuan Hsien to Yichün Hsien, a distance of 80 li. The track runs up the valley to the north, the loess hills gradually becoming more rocky and less cultivated, for 25 li to the barrier hamlet of Chinso Kuan, where an old wall and fort guard the entrance to a gorge. Here the loess is left behind and scrub-covered mountains are entered through a winding gorge, which leads by an easy ascent after three hours' march to the hamlet of Liehch'uan, lying on the top of the range at a height of about 4700 feet. From the pass there is no immediate descent, the track following along a winding ridge in the grass and brush-covered hills for 25 li, and then descending a few hundred feet to reach Yichün, a dilapidated little city, built on the side of the ridge, the centre of a very poor third class district. 487 133 [36]

The range of mountains crossed on this day's march forms the watershed between the Lo and Wei rivers, the two principal streams draining Northern Shensi, and rises well above the loess covering. Perhaps the soil of no region in the world has been worked by man to the same extent as the loess of Central Shensi, where the Chinese have been scratching, sowing, and reaping uninterruptedly for some 4000 years or more, and the landscape of those plains appears tired and worn out. It is therefore a relief to get out of the loess, with its alternate dust and mud, glaring heat, insufficient and often brackish water, and treeless and monotonous scenery, into these mountains with their clear streams, grassy downs, and brush-covered slopes, haunted by innumerable deer and pheasants. In all our travels we found few spots more teeming with game than the hill sides in the neighbourhood of Yichün, and being now in a country where supplies were practically nil, we bagged quantities of cock pheasants, in pursuit of which it was seldom necessary to go more than a hundred yards from the road. We saw plenty of deer, apparently roe, too, but as we could get as many pheasants as we wanted, we did not trouble to go after them. [311] 136

This range also marks the dividing line at present between the comparatively peaceful regions of Central Shensi and the brigand infested north. Yichün had been raided but recently, and was generally speaking in a most dilapidated condition from this and previous raids. When leaving the next morning we passed a crowd of the usual emaciated dogs outside the North Gate feasting on the remains of some decapitated brigands, an unpleasant sight at six o'clock in the morning, but one which gave great pleasure to most of the party. For a dead brigand cannot but be a pleasant sight to a peaceful Chinese, and my companions kept on repeating to themselves with real satisfaction *kou ch'ih t'u fei* (dogs eating brigands), as being an entirely 579 628

579 suitable and satisfactory state of affairs. Unfortunately my
enquiries showed that these decapitated bodies were not
628 those of the real brigands of these regions at all, but of
some strangers who arrived at the city gates and could not
give a satisfactory account of themselves, and who had
accordingly been executed so as to be on the safe side.

634 Most of the magistrates in Shensi are now natives of the province, young students and military officers of the new school, but in one of the districts on this road we met an official of the old type of magistrate *de carrière*, a Hunanese who had just come down from Chinese Turkestan where he had been serving for years. Though the virtues of the new type of local official in China may be great, it was a pleasure to meet a gentleman of the old school with his many and varied experiences, and we had a long talk about mutual acquaintances serving in the deserts of the far North West.

487 From Yichün the path follows down the ridge descending
gradually for 35 li to the village of P'iench'iao, where the
133 mountains give way once more to loess hills and the ridge
flattens out into a plateau. The track continues across this
tableland, winding to and fro to avoid the usual rifts in the
loess falling away into the valleys on either side, and then
descends steeply for the last five li to reach the district city
of Chungpu lying in the narrow valley of a stream flowing
east.

132 We were now once more in the loess with its glaring dry heat and choking dust. The season of the year was early June, when all over North China there is a spell of very hot dry weather, corresponding, presumably, to the heat of Northern India before the monsoon. In July and August the rains break, and though the steamy heat is then trying enough, and the loess is turned into slimy mud, the change is a great relief.

634 At Chungpu we were met by the Taoyin of Northern
Shensi, whose seat is at Yülin Fu on the edge of the Ordos.
His post is at present a most difficult one owing to the
northern districts being so overrun with brigands. He told
us that the extreme north of the province was much less
desolate and more prosperous than the districts we were
487 now traversing. We had heard much of the terrible "bitter-

ness" of this road, and certainly what with the ravages of 487
brigands and the natural infertility of the soil, the few
inhabitants were poor to the verge of starvation. Yenan
seems to be the centre of the most desolate area, by far the
poorest region I have traversed in China outside the actual
deserts.

Chungpu, a poor little third class district city half in 361
ruins, lies on the side of a hill, with a sacred grove of very
ancient trees behind it, which present a remarkable sight 778
in this treeless country. Near by is a small temple containing 769
the tomb of the Emperor Huang Ti, who reigned some 4000
years ago, which illustrates the great antiquity of these little
Shensi towns.

The next day's stage to Loch'uan Hsien is a trying 487
march through the loess. The track follows down the valley
to the east for 20 li, and then turning north climbs up through 133
a gully on to the plateau a few hundred feet above, across
which it runs for an hour's march to the hamlet of Antzu
T'ou, whence it drops into the valley of the Lo River. This
stream resembles the Ching Ho, a muddy torrent twenty
yards wide, and flows in a narrow valley some hundreds
of feet below the level of the loess plateau. It is crossed by [491]
a ferry at the hamlet of Chiaoho K'ou, and the path then
climbs steeply out of the valley again and runs across the
plateau in a N.E. direction for three hours' march to reach
the district city of Loch'uan. The latter is the usual little 361
third class Hsien city of Northern Shensi, but appeared to
be rather more prosperous than its neighbours and to show
less signs of the ravages of brigands. It lies on the loess
plateau, intersected as usual by colossal rifts, the heads of
some of which are so close to the city that they threaten
to engulf it in a few years time. These towns and villages
on the loess plateau are quite unapproachable except by
the existing roads owing to the rifts which open up all
around, and could be held by a few men against an army;
perhaps that is why Loch'uan appeared comparatively
immune from brigand raids.

From Loch'uan to Fu Chou is another exhausting march 487
in the loess of 75 li. The track runs N.E. across the plateau
for an hour's march until it is held up by a huge cañon 133
with the usual perpendicular walls. Climbing in and out of

487 this gorge it continues across the plateau, only to meet a
few li further on with another and still larger rift, at the
133 bottom of which there is a welcome stream and a hamlet
called Chiehtzu Ho, the boundary of Loch'uan district. The
crossing of a district boundary was always noticeable
throughout our journeys, because it entailed a welcome rest
and an exchange of civilities with a new magistrate. After
the usual five hundred foot climb out of this cañon the path
runs across the plateau northwards for an hour or so, and
then drops again into the valley of the Lo River, here containing
a considerably less volume of water than where
crossed on the preceding stage, the difference being due
to a large tributary from the west which joins it in between.
[311] Most of the terraced mountain sides in this neighbourhood
have gone out of cultivation, and from here north to Yenan
Fu the country becomes more and more desolate and
depopulated. Another 20 li up the winding valley brings
one to Fu Chou.

361 Fu Chou, now Fu Hsien, a second class district city,
is a fortress of great antiquity guarding this highway into
712 the heart of ancient China against the invasions of the hordes
of barbarians from the North. It fills up most of the valley
with its walls climbing up the hillside. Since the Mongol
ceased to threaten Fu Chou has entirely lost its former
importance and is now in a most miserable and decayed
condition. A walk on the wall shows the usual dilapidated
little city, but a stroll through the streets reveals the fact
that it is practically empty, *k'ung ch'eng*, as a Chinese
[166] remarked to me. The explanation of this lay in the fact
that it had been sacked four times by brigands during
the preceding year, and the inhabitants, having given up
residence there as hopeless, had emigrated to other parts or
634 provinces. We afterwards passed through many other cities
and villages in Northern Shensi in the same condition. The
625 post of magistrate in these districts is an exceedingly
unenviable one, and it appears to be difficult to get men
579 to take them up. If the brigands come, the *ching pei
tui* (police) are helpless, and the magistrate is lucky if
he can save his life by escaping into the mountains. The
official of one of these cities informed me that it was inadvisable
to arm the local police with modern rifles, as, the

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place having long been swept bare of all its valuables, there
would be nothing to attract another raid provided there were 579
no modern arms and ammunition in the place. Silver,
opium, rifles, and ammunition are what the brigands go
for. The only thing that was not utterly decayed in Fu Chou 712
was a brand new *chai* (hill fort) on the top of the mountain
behind the town, built by the magistrate and the few
remaining inhabitants as a refuge against the next raid. In 534
the centre of the town is an old tower containing an ancient
bronze bell of fine workmanship dating from the T'ang
Dynasty, the only object of value which survives the
periodical raids. From Fu Chou a track leads westwards to
Ch'ingyang Fu in Kansu, one of the very few east to west
trails in these parts.

From Fu Chou to Kanch'uan Hsien, a distance of 85 487
to 90 li, the trail runs up the valley of the Lo River through 133
poor-looking crops of maize, millet, hemp, and wheat. The
loess hills on either side are mostly uncultivated and the 361
whole region gives the impression of turning into desert.
Several miserable hamlets are passed, consisting mostly of 342
caves or cave houses, the latter queer-looking square huts
built of earth and stones with tunnel-like interiors. Scarcity of wood for roofing purposes is said to be the reason for constructing these remarkable artificial caves, but probably the people are so used to living in caves that they do not feel at home in anything else. A good cave in the loess is not to be despised as a dwelling, being rain proof, warm in winter and cool in summer. Owing to the vertical cleavage which is always going on in the loess these caves are constantly collapsing, but the owners seem to know by instinct when it is necessary to remove to a new abode. Kanch'uan is a smaller replica of Fu Chou, a ruined empty shell of a city.

Here the trail to Yenan, distant 85 li, leaves the Lo River 487
and follows up a side valley to the N.E. which leads after
three to four hours' march by an easy ascent to the pass
(4100 feet) in the divide between the Lo Ho and the Yen 133
Shui. This divide is entirely covered by loess, but curiously enough there is a complete change of scenery, and the ascent and descent is through jungle clad ravines and over grassy downs. These mountains are uncultivated and uninhabited,

133 but here and there the remains of old terraces, evidently abandoned for many years, are noticeable. Descending from

487 the pass this curious zone of comparatively rich vegetation is soon left behind and one approaches Yenan by a desolate looking valley between hills of sandy, barren loess. The

[243] crops are miserable in the extreme, and consist mostly of millet, little or no wheat being grown. Three to four hours' march down this valley brought us to the gates of Yenan Fu.

316 no oil was found anywhere except at Yench'ang alongside of the original Japanese well.

471 Finally in the summer of 1916 work was stopped, the Americans withdrew, and the enterprise was apparently abandoned, the bulky machinery being left behind. Apart from the absence of oil, there must have been many difficulties to contend with in connection with the brigandage and increasing chaos in that region.

The wells have now been filled in, and scarcely a trace of the Americans remains, except for the derelict machinery and the good reputation the surveyors and geologists left behind them amongst the natives, who speak of their departure with great regret and look forward to their ultimate return.

The failure of the enterprise was a bitter disappointment to the local Chinese, for whom the two years were a golden age and who had conjured up visions of railways, roads and pipe-lines, and an era of booming prosperity. Instead of which Northern Shensi now continues as of old to produce little but sand and brigands.

The two original Japanese wells continue to produce oil, and the concern, under official management, flourishes in a small way. Their output is limited by their facilities for refining and transporting the oil, and only one well is therefore usually at work. The oil is sold in the neighbourhood and also across the Yellow River in Shansi, where the people [492] are more prosperous. Transport is by pack mule over the roughest of mountain trails, and the expense of carriage prevents its penetrating any great distance. It was of course owing to the inaccessibility of the region that it was necessary to find oil in really large quantities to make the installation of a pipe-line, say to the Yangtzu, worth the enormous expense entailed.

• 487 133 From Yenan we proposed proceeding east to Yench'ang and to work our way thence somehow or other back to Hsian through Eastern Shensi. Of course everyone said there was no road in that direction, and we knew that the country just west of the Yellow River was likely to prove very rough and poor. But we felt confident that we should as usual always find trails of some kind from one district city to another. As events turned out we found a trail, which, though very arduous and passing through desperately 487 poor mountainous country just inland from the Yellow 133 River, had apparently once been quite an important route. From Yenan to Hsian by this route *via* Yich'uan and Han-ch'eng was a distance of about 1030 li, and took us more than two weeks' hard travelling.

From Yenan to Yench'ang is two days' march, 80 and 60 li respectively. The first stage lies down the valley of the Yen Shui between low hills of loess to the village of Kanku Yi. Ten li out one of the oil wells drilled by the Americans in 1916 is passed in the mouth of a small gorge; it has now been filled in. There are several cave villages on [361] the road, the largest being Yaotientzu 50 li out, where there are inns. Kanku Yi, as its name implies, is the ruin of an [185] old fortified posting stage (*Yi*) such as are common on the main roads of Kansu; here the main trail to the north of the province turns N.E. to Yench'uan and Suitê, while the Yench'ang track continues down the valley to the east.

Twenty-five li from Kanku Yi, at the hamlet of Heichia P'o, the river turns south, and the trail strikes up a ravine to the east to gain the top of the loess plateau some 500 feet above the valley, runs across the level upland for a few li, and then drops steeply into another ravine, which is followed for 20 li till it debouches again into the valley of the Yen Shui at Yench'ang Hsien.

Yench'ang lies in the narrow valley of the Yen Shui, 316 right on the river bank, in the mouth of a tributary ravine. The presence of the petroleum is very apparent from the smell which pervades the whole place, and as we were quartered and entertained on the premises of the oil concern and within a few yards of the principal well, the penetrating smell of mineral oil never seemed to leave us for a moment from the time of our arrival till that of our departure. The two wells lie just outside the city wall to the west; the principal one was pouring forth a steady stream of oil at the time of our visit and apparently never ceases doing so. The city itself is the usual little third class district town of 361 Northern Shensi, but it is less dilapidated than most of its neighbours and the walls are in better repair. This is owing to its not having been sacked by brigands during recent years, for which immunity from the prevailing evil credit is also, it seems, due to the beneficent oil.

000 is also, it seems, due to the beneficent oil. As the traveller
373 approaches Yench'ang he will note that the city walls appear to be weeping or oozing oil, and the explanation of this curious fact becomes strikingly apparent at night time. For in the embrasures all round the walls every yard or so are placed pans of crude oil, which are lit up when darkness falls and illuminate the whole city and neighbourhood in the most remarkable manner. The effect on anyone not expecting it is extremely startling. Night after night throughout the year this desolate little city lost in the wilds of Northern Shensi indulges in this orgy of illumination. But it costs practically nothing and seems to be very effective in scaring off the brigands, who usually make their raids on moonless nights; doubtless the prospect of having a pan of burning oil upset over their heads deters them also.

● 487 The next stage on our journey by this route was the city of Yich'uan Hsien, two long marches due south of Yench'ang.
133 The trail runs down the gorges of the Yen Shui, being ledged in the cliff on the left bank, for about 15 li, and then crossing the river by a ford strikes up the hill side to the south to reach the top of the loess plateau some 600 to 700 feet above the valley; continuing across the plateau for an hour or so it then drops steeply to the hamlet of Ankou Chen in the gorge of a tributary of the Yen Shui, called 35 li from Yench'ang. From Ankou the path strikes immediately up the opposite hill to reach the top of the plateau again, the latter here taking the form of a series of flat-topped loess ridges running down towards the Yen Shui from a range trending east and west. A two hours' march to the south up the flat top of one of these ridges brought us to the top of the range (4500 feet), the watershed between the Yen Shui and a stream called the Yunai Ho; the range is composed of grassy downs of loess with occasional outcroppings of rock. From the pass the trail follows a spur to the south, which soon flattens out into the usual square-topped loess ridge, and descends gradually for four to five hours' march, with finally a steep drop into the valley of the Yunai Ho to reach the ruined township of Yunai Chen. The country traversed on this day's march, as also on the following one, consists of loess mountains with a little cultivation on their lower slopes. Villages are very scarce,

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and the trackless downs and mountains are the haunts of the brigands of these regions, who live in unknown cave villages in the heights, whence they make their forays into the valleys. All the streams, such as the Yunai Ho and others, take their rise in these loess mountains and run eastwards to join the Yellow River, flowing in beds of shale and sandstone at the bottom of narrow valleys in the loess. The Yellow River is said to be reached 100 li down the valley from Yunai Chen. From Yench'ang to Yunai Chen is called 80, 90, or 100 li, according to the fancy of the individual questioned. Distances are not fixed on these small by-roads as they are on the main trails. We found it a very long march; my mule train, composed of particularly good animals which usually averaged well over three miles per hour, took more than ten hours to cover the distance, exclusive of halts. The li on the small roads of Northern Shensi and Kansu are very long. 100 li on a main road in the Han valley is certainly not more than 25 miles at the outside; but the 100 li from Yench'ang to Yunai must be nearer 35 miles.

The next day's march to Yich'uan Hsien is called 80 li. The path runs up a side ravine to the south-west for an hour and then ascends steeply to gain the top of the plateau, which here serves as the divide between the Yunai Ho and the Yich'uan stream. This divide is not a mountain range but a level tableland of loess, the highest point being about 4000 feet. There is the usual view over innumerable flat-topped loess ridges sinking down in the east towards the Yellow River, the trough of which can be vaguely descried; to the north the range crossed on the preceding march bounds the view; and to the south a similar but higher range rises steeply behind the Yich'uan valley. After an hour's march in a southerly direction, descending gradually along the usual flat-topped ridge of loess, the track drops steeply into a ravine which leads down after 20 li to the ruins of a walled village called P'inglo P'u, resembling hundreds of similar dilapidated old forts scattered throughout Northern Shensi and Kansu, most of which have been taken and retaken, sacked and re-sacked, by Mahomedans and Chinese during the days of the great rebellion. Here the path leaves the stream, which flows S.E., and striking again up the slope to

487 the south, runs for two hours' march across the flat-topped
hills, descending finally by precipitous zigzags to reach the
133 city of Yich'uan lying in the narrow valley of a stream
flowing east to join the Yellow River. The country crossed
on this march is again pure loess, very sparsely populated,
and with innumerable grass-grown terraces which have gone
out of cultivation and render evident the depopulation of
the region.

361 Yich'uan Hsien, lying at the junction of two narrow
valleys in the loess, is the capital of a second class district,
and was evidently a comparatively large and prosperous city
in the past. At the time of our visit it was practically empty,
and lying in the heart of that wild and little frequented region
which contains the chief haunts of the brigand bands of
Northern Shensi, it is at the present time uninhabitable by
any but the poorest classes. Northern Shensi, depopulated
669 by the Mahomedan rebellion fifty years ago, and now
162 probably undergoing a process of desiccation, is losing its
few remaining inhabitants of the better class through the
devastations of the brigands, many having moved across the
Yellow River into Shansi, where conditions are much better.
Recently a large band of brigands, perhaps finding that
Northern Shensi was getting rather bare, also moved across
the river; but prompt military measures were taken by the
Shansi authorities and they were soon driven back to their
original haunts with great loss. The question naturally
arises, why should these brigands be left apparently unmolested
by the authorities of their own province?

701 The answer is provided by the history of events in
Shensi during the years since the revolution of 1911, which
579 is outlined in another chapter. The brigands of Northern
Shensi are mostly ex-soldiers and Ko Lao Hui men, and
are composed of the same material as the provincial troops,
with whom they exchange rôles from time to time. It is
therefore not possible to use the latter against them. Further,
they constitute in a way the reserves of the provincial army,
which are thus maintained without cost to the provincial
[714] Government. The Shensi soldier usually owns his own
Mauser and as much ammunition as he can carry wound
round and round his body in a cloth bandolier, acquired
in the course of some previous rebellion or brigand raid,

669 secret society men as soldiers; after the rebellion is over,
whether it succeeds or not, the soldiers are disbanded and
579 scatter with their arms over the country, with the inevitable
result of increased brigandage. The growth of brigandage in
701 Shensi may easily be traced since 1911, the revolution of that
year, the rebellion of 1913, the White Wolf rebellion in 1914,
the anti-monarchical rebellion of 1916, the troubles of 1917,
and so on.

From Yich'uan Hsien to Hanch'eng Hsien is a distance
133 of about 240 li, three hard days' march by a difficult track
487 through the mountains which here hem in the Yellow River.
All the way from Yench'ang south to the plains of Central Shensi, which are reached at Hanch'eng, the traveller is crossing a series of parallel ridges trending east and west across his path; but while between Yench'ang and Yich'uan the intervals between these ridges are filled by loess which provides comparatively easy slopes, the region between the latter place and Hanch'eng is covered by mountains which are practically free from loess and entail the crossing of a series of precipitous little passes. The trail slants across these mountains towards the Yümen K'ou, the point where the Yellow River emerges from its gorges on to the plains; the river itself is not touched, though glimpses are caught from the tops of the passes of its huge trough in the mountains.

From Yich'uan the trail runs up the valley to the S.W. for a few li and then turns up a gorge to the south, which leads after a couple of hours' march to the foot of the barrier range which bounds the Yich'uan valley on the south. A steep climb leads to the pass, the Lut'ou Ling (5100 feet). This range and the valleys and spurs leading up to it, though covered with loess on the northern side, are uncultivated and uninhabited. On the southern side there is practically no loess, and the latter is not met with in any quantity again till the path debouches on to the plains of the Yellow River above Hanch'eng three days later. The absence of loess in the low-lying valley bottoms of these mountains is rather curious, and one may speculate whether perhaps the Lut'ou Ling range, which before the existence of the Yellow River was probably joined to the mountains of Shansi, did not form a barrier keeping the floods which deposited the loess from reaching this region, which con-

stitutes an isolated area sloping S.E. and hemmed in by 133
surrounding mountains; in the case of the similar Yich'uan 487
and Yunai basins further north, the surrounding mountains were perhaps not sufficiently high to keep out the floods, the ranges being themselves nowadays buried in loess.

From the pass there is an easy descent through a gorge for 20 li to Hsiehchia P'ing, the ruins of a hamlet destroyed by brigands, where several ravines join to form a stream flowing east towards the Yellow River. The surrounding mountain slopes are rocky and uncultivated, and except for the scarcity of water resemble the Ch'inling ranges rather than the mountains of Northern Shensi. From Hsiehchia P'ing the path follows up a side ravine which leads after an hour's scramble to another pass (4800 feet); it then drops straight down the mountain side into a gorge which is followed for four hours' march until it expands into a valley at Ch'iyi Chen, a small township called 100 li from Yich'uan, where we passed the night. This is an exceedingly long and tiring day's march over a rough and rocky trail, and my mules were nearly twelve hours on the road; but there is no accommodation short of Ch'iyi Chen, the mountains being almost uninhabited and the few huts passed having mostly been destroyed by the brigands, and we had no tents with us on this journey. Everyone was fairly exhausted when we got in, a tremendous thunderstorm during the last hour completing our discomfiture; but owing, as usual, to the thoughtful assistance of the district magistrate we were comfortably housed in the principal shop of the village. Throughout our long wanderings the preparation of accommodation of some kind at the end of a march by the local official made all the difference to our comfort; schools, yamens, forts, rest-houses, temples, shops, private residences, inns, farms, caves, huts, and tents, have all served us for accommodation at different times, and the order in which they are quoted represents roughly their comparative merits. Starting at daybreak after a cup of tea or cocoa 484
we used usually to march for about three hours and then halt for an hour or two for a good square meal; in the meantime if the march was not too long the pack mules would travel right through, so that the baggage had arrived and was already unpacked by the time we got in in the early

484 afternoon. This is the height of luxury in travel in North Western China. Riding good ambling ponies we used to average four miles or more per hour on a good trail, and a day's journey of 80 li seemed nothing under these conditions. But a few really tiring marches (and this is one of them) stand out in my memory, when we had to cover a hundred li or more over rocky mountain paths where it might be necessary to walk half of the way; the hardest day of all was a march on the Kokonor border, when we started at 6 a.m. and got in at 9 p.m., crossing a pass over 13,000 feet high on the way.

487 Leaving Ch'iyi Chen the track runs down the valley towards the Yellow River for a few li and then strikes 133 straight up the mountain side to the south to reach the pass (3600 feet). This ridge is the boundary between the districts of Yich'uan and Hanch'eng, which are both very extended ones. From the pass there is a steep drop into a gorge and then a climb over a loess spur to reach the hamlet of Tuch'uan lying in a narrow ravine. From here the trail strikes again up the mountain side to the south, crosses a pass (4100 feet), and descends along a loess ridge with finally a steep drop to reach the walled village of Wangfeng Ch'iao lying in the narrow valley of a stream flowing east. From Ch'iyi Chen to Wangfeng Ch'iao is the middle stage in the three days' march between Yich'uan and Hanch'eng, and though only called 60 li in length is a tiring day's work, consisting of one long scramble up and down the mountains. As this route slants across the ridges to the S.E. and approaches the Yellow River, the passes decrease in altitude and some loess begins to reappear. The mountains in this neighbourhood appear to be full of iron ore.

From Wangfeng Ch'iao the track ascends the mountain side to the south to reach a pass (3400 feet) in the last range which bars the way to the plains. From the previous passes there were extensive views across the cañon of the Yellow River to the mountains of Shansi, but the river itself remained invisible; from this ridge it is seen for the first time, emerging from the mountains at the mouth of the 173 gorge known as Yümen K'ou. This is a very celebrated spot amongst the Chinese, since their annals record that the Emperor Yu (2000 B.C.) here cut a channel through the

mountains to drain off the great floods which at that time 173
submerged the whole of North West China, thus bringing
into existence the modern Yellow River and the fertile
deposits of *Huang T'u* (the "yellow earth," which we call
loess); perhaps an earthquake gave rise to this tradition.

From this last pass the track drops steeply into a gorge 487 ●
which is followed for an hour's march to the S.E., and then,
crossing the spur which encloses the gorge on the south, 133
drops down into the loess plains on the right bank of the
Yellow River. From this point to Hanch'eng Hsien, a
distance of 40 li, the trail runs across an undulating plain,
which is not really a plain but the usual loess plateau, here
of moderate thickness, sloping down from the mountains to
the Yellow River, the latter flowing five to ten li away on
one's left. This plain between the foot hills and the river [361]
is one of the most fertile and densely populated regions
in the province, and is thickly dotted with farms, villages,
temples, tombs, and pagodas. It is always so in North
China, densely peopled fertile plains and barren empty
mountains side by side. The largest of the many villages
passed is Hsichuang, where there is a likin station to catch
the trade coming down from the North by the route we
had traversed; but its receipts must be small nowadays, for
not only not on this road, but at no time during our tour of
Northern Shensi, did we meet a single load of merchandize
or a single traveller of the better class, so utterly has all
trade and traffic in that region been destroyed by the
brigands. Finally there is a short steep descent to reach
the city of Hanch'eng, which lies surrounded by fields of
indigo in a basin in the loess plateau formed by the valley
of a stream flowing S.E.

Hanch'eng, a second class district city, is a large and 361
wealthy town, at least it appeared to us to be so, coming
from the poverty-stricken North. The district is one of the
most fertile in the province, and is noted for its wheat,
cotton, hemp, and indigo. The irrigated fields round the 241
city produce three crops in one summer, maize being sown
after a crop of wheat has been harvested, and indigo being
then transplanted in early June into the same field, the
indigo and the maize growing up together.

The most direct road from Hanch'eng to Hsian lies 487
133

•487 through the cities of T'ungchou Fu and Weinan Hsien across the plains along the Yellow River, but we followed a
133 slightly longer route further north across the loess uplands *via* Hoyang, Ch'engch'eng, P'uch'eng, Fup'ing, and Sanyuan, a week's journey by a good and mostly level trail. The season of the year was now late June and the rains had not yet broken, so we expected a scorching hot journey across these plains; but fortunately we struck the season of high winds which blow for a few days before the rains break, and had quite a pleasant journey until the last day or two, when we were overtaken by the opening downpours of the rainy season and had a hard struggle to get across the waterlogged plain of the Wei River.

From Hanch'eng Hsien to Hoyang Hsien is a long march
[491] called 95 li. The road, now a good cart track, leaves Hanch'eng by the South Gate, and crossing a fine stone bridge runs down the valley through indigo fields for 20 li, where it debouches on to the Yellow River at the township of Chihch'uan Chen, a prosperous little city with an important likin station tapping the trade with Shansi. This
[361] place, like many other non-official townships we passed on the road to Hsian, is larger and wealthier than any district city we saw in Northern Shensi. At Chihch'uan the road leaves the Yellow River and climbs up on to the loess plateau some hundreds of feet above, across which it runs
388 south-west and west, past the townships of Pailiang Chen (in Hoyang district) and T'ungchia Chuang, a centre of the vegetable oil industry, and many smaller villages, for the rest of the way to Hoyang. This plateau is just like all the other loess uplands, an undulating wheat prairie intersected by rifts and valleys; and the passage of two of these cañons hundreds of feet deep makes the march a long and arduous one.

[361] Hoyang is a fairly large city, the centre of a first class district; but it is a poor-looking place inside, like most of these purely agricultural prairie towns, and is not to be compared with Hanch'eng, which probably does a good deal of trade with prosperous Shansi. It lies in a slight depression of the rolling loess uplands, now covered with short wheat stubble. Supplies of all kinds are abundant on this road, but game is scarce; though an occasional pheasant was to be seen in the bare fields.

From Hoyang to Ch’engch’eng, a short march of 45 li, 487
the trail runs west across the same undulating plains, 133
traversing two deep cañons *en route*. Ch’engch’eng, a [634]
second class district city, is a replica of Hoyang.

The next stage to P’uch’eng is a very long march,
called 105 li, probably over 30 miles, for the li are long on
these prairies. The trail runs south across the plain past 361
numerous hamlets, descending gradually, for three to four
hours’ march, and then drops by easy gradients in the loess
terraces to the walled township of Yungfeng Chen, 50 li
from Ch’engch’eng, in the valley of the Lo River. These
little walled towns often have the characters for their names
inscribed over the gateway, like stations on a railway, a
custom which is most useful to the traveller, and which I
have not noticed elsewhere.

Five li west of Yungfeng the Lo River, at low water a 487
few feet deep and fifteen yards wide, and of the consistency [491]
of liquid mud, is crossed by a ferry. The Lo here flows
from north to south; on the right bank rises a loess bluff 133
a few hundred feet high, and on the left the open valley
some miles wide stretches up by easy slopes and low terraces
to the level of the plateau. From the ferry the trail ascends
the bluff constituting the edge of the tableland, and then
runs west across the usual undulating wheat prairies, dotted
with walled farms and villages, for the rest of the way to 361
P’uch’eng.

P’uch’eng lies in the open plain backed by low
mountains about ten miles to the north. It is a large and
important place, a first class district city and the centre of
a great wheat-growing region. Many prominent men in
Shensi have their homes in the district, which therefore, in
these days of home rule, exercises considerable influence in
the province. These large first class districts in the loess of
Central Shensi, such as P’uch’eng, Lint’ung, Weinan, and
Fup’ing, the very heart of ancient China, have always been
proverbial for their agricultural wealth, and to this day the
provincial Government subsists largely off their land tax [651]
revenues.

From P’uch’eng to Fup’ing, another long march of 95 487
li, the trail continues west across the same undulating
prairies past many villages including the township of 133

487 133 Hsingshih Chen, a busy place where much of the commerce of P'uch'eng district is carried on. Fup'ing, another important first class district city, lies in a depression in the loess plain caused by the shallow valley of a stream which provides irrigated lands of the richest kind. We chanced to be travelling this trail at a time when political affairs were in a more than usually chaotic state and the authority of the officials more than usually relaxed, and we had been strongly advised not to follow this route owing to the alleged large and turbulent populations of P'uch'eng and Fup'ing, who are said to be noted for their independence and love of managing their own affairs (*P'u Fu jen to, pei hsing pu an*, as one member of our party kept repeating); but, as almost everywhere else on our travels, we found the people perfectly friendly.

From Fup'ing to Sanyuan should be an easy march of 60 li; but the rains had now suddenly broken and it was an arduous day ploughing through the loess mud, which has a peculiar slimy character of its own, rendering progress whether on foot or on horseback dreadfully slow. The trail runs S.W. for a few li across low-lying land, apparently the valley of the Yao Chou River, which was largely under [248] cotton, and then continues for 20 li across a wheat-growing plateau to the boundary of the two districts. Here there is a steep drop through a loess cutting into a level plain across which the track runs for the rest of the way to Sanyuan.

361 438 Sanyuan, the centre of a second class district, is one of the largest and most important cities in the province, though this is not saying much. Commercially it is an annex to Hsian Fu, much of the commerce which really belongs to the latter being transacted here to avoid the official exactions of the provincial capital. For the same reason most of the trade to and from Kansu passes through Sanyuan. During recent years it has played an important part in the various rebellions and other political events which have so disturbed the province, and its trade has therefore been for the moment destroyed. The city lies on a level loess plain, and is bisected by a stream flowing in a deep rift, which is spanned by a fine stone bridge; the southern portion contains the shops and life of the place, the northern being mostly empty. Cart roads radiate in all directions across the plain.

797 thoroughly sound and sensible policy. The conversion of
the Chinese is a tough proposition; but there is a far tougher
one confronting the missionary in the North West, and
that is the conversion of the Mahomedans and Tibetans in
Kansu. The Chinese is apathetic towards Christianity, while
keeping an open mind towards any aspect of it which may
be turned to his material advantage. The Tibetan or
Mahomedan on the other hand is usually not at all apathetic,
but very actively hostile towards any attempt to convert him.

487 From Sanyuan to Hsian Fu is a day's march, called 90 li
by the Chinese owing to the passage of the two rivers which
133 occupies an hour or so, and is therefore considered the
equivalent of 10 li. For us it was a long slow march,
floundering through the mud in pouring rain. The road
[349] runs due south across the plain, the pagoda of the village
of Ch'ingyang T'a being a prominent landmark for the first
30 li. A few li beyond this village the Ching Ho is reached
[491] and crossed by a cart ferry, and another 15 li across a low
table-land of loess dotted with the curious tumuli, some
from fifty to one hundred feet high and said to be the tombs
of ancient kings, brings one to the Wei River, varying from
a few hundred yards to a mile in width according to the
248 season, and crossed by a cart ferry. These plains along the
Wei and Ching rivers are the great cotton-growing areas of
439 Central Shensi. Cotton has always been a staple crop of
the province, and is one of the principal exports. It is now
being grown more extensively than ever and is being bought
up for export by the Japanese. The soil and climate appear
well suited to its cultivation, and there seems to be no
reason why its quality should not be improved by scientific
methods, nor why there should not be a big cotton spinning
industry in Hsian and the neighbourhood. As it is the
Japanese buy the cotton, take it to Japan to spin, and then
return it to the Chinese in the form of yarn.

491 We found the Wei River in flood and had a hard time crossing it. The ferry took us over the main stream, but two branches in flood had to be forded with the water up to the ponies' bellies and running like a mill race. One of the carts accompanying us, containing the baggage of the soldiers, apparently drove into a hole and disappeared except for its hood; we were too much occupied at the time with our own

ponies and mules and I never heard what happened to it 491
or whether there was anyone inside. The Chinese pack saddle is made in two parts, the framework containing the [492]
baggage resting unattached on the saddle proper, an excellent system permitting of quick and easy loading and unloading; but it has the disadvantage that if the mule falls in fording a difficult river, his load is likely to disappear for good. A few li after crossing the Wei River the village of Tsaot'an 487
is reached, whence the road continues south across the plain for 25 li to reach the north wall of Hsian Fu.

CHAPTER VII

FROM HSIAN FU IN SHENSI TO CHENGTU FU IN SZECHUAN BY THE MAIN ROAD

The Szechuan road—The T'ung Ch'eng Railway—Hsienyang—Hsingp'ing—Wukung—Fufeng—Ch'ishan—Paochi—Shensi mules—Passage of Ch'in-ling Shan—Fenghsien—Loess—Feng- Ling—Ch'aikuan Ling—Liupa—Paoch'eng—Manchu Restoration—Mienhsien—Gold in the Han mountains—Sources of Han River—Ningchiang—Entry into Szechuan—The Chialing Chiang and Kuangyuan—Chaohua—The narrows of Chienmen Kuan—Chienchou—Tzutung—Mienchou—Lochiang and the cities of the Chengtu plain—Chengtu—Szechuanese and Yunnanese.

487 FROM Hsian, the capital of Shensi, to Chengtu, the capital of Szechuan, by the main road is a distance of 2225 li, say a little over 500 miles (the li in this direction averaging about four to one mile). Travelling the regular stages, it is possible to cover this distance in less than a month, but as our caravan was rather exhausted by its long wanderings, and the heat was at times very oppressive, we journeyed slowly and with occasional rests, and took five to six weeks to reach Chengtu.

This road is about the most important overland route in China, though the traffic on it has somewhat diminished since the introduction of steamers on the upper Yangtzu between Ichang and Chungking, well-to-do travellers nowadays preferring to make a détour by way of Hankow and thus to avoid the hardships of so long an overland journey. As well as being the main and practically the only artery of communication between Shensi and Szechuan, it is a section of the great highway from Peking to Lassa. For the tourist who wishes to see the interior of China, a journey from Peking *via* Hsian to Chengtu by this road, and thence back by river to Shanghai, would provide a tour of great interest through some of the finest scenery in China Proper, besides entailing a minimum of the hardships inseparable from travel in the interior, supplies and accommodation being abundant all the way. After leaving the Wei valley it is a mule trail,
487
491

[P. 36]

paved most of the way and comparatively good in Szechuan, 487
but very rough and rocky through the mountains of Shensi. 491
Lying most of the way through Southern Shensi and
Szechuan, where paved paths and flights of irregular stone
steps are the rule, it is unsuitable for ponies, and it is advisable
to take a chair, at any rate from the Han valley onwards.
We started with ponies, having used them on all our journeys
through the North West, but were compelled to take to
chairs when we got into Szechuan, as the steps and paving
stones knocked our ponies' feet to pieces. Walking and
chairing is a pleasant enough method of travel, but very
slow, the rate of progress in the mountains being only about
eight li per hour, which makes the stages long.

The Belgians have secured a concession for the construction of a trunk railway from Tatung in Northern Shansi to Chengtu in Szechuan. It is a peculiar line to have chosen and one which will involve considerable engineering difficulties in Shensi and Szechuan. In nine cases out of ten the railway surveyor is unable to find a better trace for a line than that followed by an ancient highway of commerce, but if this railway is to follow the main trail between Hsian and Chengtu, its constructors are going to have a difficult job. The traveller by this road can therefore beguile the monotony of the journey by speculating as to the feasibility or otherwise of constructing a railway along it; it will certainly not be easy to find a less difficult route.

We left Hsian Fu on the 29th of June in a downpour
of rain and floundered through the mud across the plain to [361]
reach Hsienyang Hsien, fortunately only 50 li away. This
city, a poor-looking place in appearance though the centre
of a first class district, is built along the northern bank of [491]
the Wei River, which is crossed by a cart ferry. It has some
importance as being more or less the head of navigation on
the Wei River, and as lying at the point where the great
highway from Hsian, T'ungkuan, Peking, and the coast
bifurcates, one branch continuing N.W. to Kansu and
Turkestan, and the other turning W. and S.W. to Szechuan
and Tibet. One cannot but speculate on the innumerable 000
travellers who have passed through its miserable little main
street, knee-deep in dust or mud, bound on their weary
way to the outposts of Chinese rule in the deserts of

000 Turkestan or Tibet, at any time during the past few
175 hundred years. Hsienyang is also famous as one of the old
capitals of China, having been the seat of no less a person
than the Emperor who designed the Great Wall, and who,
being annoyed by the supercilious conservatism of the
Chinese scholars of those days, buried several hundreds of
them alive, and burnt all their books; for which act his
name is execrated by the scholars of today.

487 Starting out from Hsienyang we left the high road to
Kansu, which we had followed two years previously, on
the right hand, and continued across the level plain to
Hsingp'ing Hsien, another short march of 50 li. This is a
second class district city lying on a wheat and cotton-growing
plain sloping from the north down towards the Wei
River.

The next stage to Wukung Hsien is a distance of 90 li,
764 still across the plain. Thirty li out, just beyond the village of
Mawei, the local magistrate who was accompanying us
175 suddenly dragged us off the road to visit a dilapidated little
temple in the fields, which turned out to be the tomb of a
notorious Imperial concubine known to every educated
Chinese as Yang Kuei-fei. She was strangled here by her
consort, the Emperor, to satisfy his troops in about 170 A.D.;
I forget the details of the story, which every Chinese knows.
There was nothing to be seen inside the temple except
the usual ancient individual busy taking rubbings of inscriptions.
Central Shensi is full of these objects of historical
interest, dating back sometimes two or three thousand
487 years. Wukung district is entered beyond the walled village
133 of Tungfufeng, which lies half-way, and the plain now begins
to rise imperceptibly and becomes the usual undulating loess
361 plateau; so that there is a sudden drop to reach the city of
Wukung Hsien lying in a valley a hundred feet or so below
the level of the loess. Three streams, from near Fenghsiang,
Linyu, and Yungshou, unite here to form a pea-soupy river
flowing south to join the Wei. Wukung, a second-class
district city, is quite a prosperous little place with busy
streets and well-stocked shops.

133 From Wukung the road climbs out of the valley and
runs across the loess uplands to the west. All along this
487 road the traveller is accompanied on his left hand by the

Ch'inling Shan, rising like a wall out of the plain to the /33
south of the Wei River, and affording fine views of its 487
culminating point the T'aipai Shan, snow-clad till midsummer (12,500 feet). The walled village of Hsinglin Chen is passed half-way out, and 15 li further on the valley of a stream from the north is crossed. Finally there is a drop to reach Fufeng Hsien, 60 li from Wukung, and a replica of the latter, lying in precisely the same sort of hollow below the level of the loess at the junction of two valleys from the north and west.

From Fufeng Hsien to Ch'ishan Hsien is another easy march of 60 li across the uplands, crossing two shallow ravines *en route*, the loess here not being of sufficient thickness to be fissured by the deep rifts and cañons found further north. Ch'ishan lies close under the mountains of the same name, with the loess plain sloping down to the Wei River to the south. The main road here continues west to Fenghsiang, but travellers bound for Szechuan like ourselves, and having no particular concern with the latter place, usually proceed direct to Paochi on the Wei River, a distance of 110 li, which can be covered in a long day's march. Ch'ishan, a second class district city, much resembles [361]
Wukung and Fufeng, and seems fairly prosperous for a city of Central Shensi.

The road now runs west and south-west across the loess uplands for about 50 li, and then descends by easy gradients for another 25 li to reach Titien, a village of inns on the Wei [485]
River, just beyond the confluence of the latter with the Ch'ien Shui from Ch'ienyang and Lungchou, the passage of which in a flooded state caused us some trouble. On this stretch of road we crossed our previous route from Mei Hsien to Fenghsiang Fu, thus affording an opportunity of checking the route survey, the results of which were not particularly encouraging; but as my instruments consisted of nothing more serious than a prismatic compass, with which I kept up a route survey throughout our journeys, this was perhaps not surprising. From Titien to Paochi the road runs west between the Wei River on the left hand and a high loess bluff on the right. The actual valley plain of the Wei is here quite narrow, as the land on the further bank rises almost immediately to the grim-looking barrier of the

133 487 Ch'inling Shan; above the loess bluff on the right hand, however, the undulating uplands stretch northwards to beyond Fenghsiang Fu till they meet the Ch'ishan range; west of Paochi these latter mountains converge on to the Ch'inling Shan, and bring the loess plains of the Wei basin altogether to an end, in much the same way as the cigar-shaped Hanchung plain ends beyond Mien Hsien.

[361] [348] [575] Paochi, a first class district city, lies on rising ground behind the Wei River with its northern wall climbing the loess bluff. It is quite a big place and evidently handles a considerable trade with Szechuan and Kansu. The inhabitants have the reputation of being turbulent and the Ko Lao Hui is very strong in the neighbourhood.

231 The western districts of Central Shensi through which we had been passing are the breeding grounds for the mules for which Shensi is famous, and which are exported in considerable quantities to the eastern provinces. At the time of our passage the wheat harvest was just over and the fields were being ploughed for the next crop. The endless plains of loess were everywhere dotted with ploughing teams consisting of mules and pony mares, the latter in almost every instance being followed by a mule foal. These Shensi and Kansu mules are the best in China, probably in the world. Fine upstanding animals, they carry loads of over 200 Chinese pounds (say 300 English pounds), travelling stages of 20 miles or more per day for weeks and months on end; the Szechuan and Yunnan mules, though good animals too, carry less than half as much. The secret of mule management in Shensi and Kansu is the feeding, and they are given an enormous amount of grain, which they spend most of the night in eating; a midday feed is not considered necessary, or even advisable, except on a very long march. The jack donkeys by which these fine mules are bred are large upstanding animals, the size of a pony, and very different from the ordinary pack-carrying donkey of North China.

133 487 [485] From Paochi to Feng Hsien is a distance of 210 li and includes the passage of the Ch'inling Shan. There are numerous inns *en route*, so that it can be divided into two, three, or more stages as the traveller prefers. Leaving Paochi the Wei River, at high water several hundred yards

wide and full of sand-banks, is crossed by a ferry, and the 133 trail then plunges into the Ch'inling Shan by a valley which 487 soon becomes a gorge hemmed in by precipitous mountains. The change from the bare loess plains and hills to these rocky, jungle-clad mountains is strikingly sudden. The road is a well-graded mule path, but very rough going, being irregularly paved with cobbles and boulders. Fifty li from Paochi we reached the hamlet of Kuanyint'ang, nestling underneath a wooded cliff, where we passed the night. Here we were met by some of our old acquaintances from the excellent Northern brigade garrisoning Hanchung and the Han valley, in whose care we were to be till reaching the Szechuan border, and said farewell for good to the picturesque ex-brigands who had formed our escort and who had looked after us so well during our tour of the Northern districts; though their past did not always bear looking into they were the best of fellows.

Crossing the loess of Central Shensi the heat had been terrific, but from now on for the next few days, till we debouched from the mountains on to the Hanchung plain at Paoch'eng, it was delightfully cool though rather rainy. Fifteen li above Kuanyint'ang the gorge ends in the pass over the main Ch'inling range (about 5100 feet); the ascent is easy, the valley leading practically up to the summit. The railway will probably have to cross this pass, but as there is a rise of some 3000 feet from Paochi, there will have to be a pretty stiff gradient or a long tunnel. The gorge resembles the approach to the Nank'ou Pass on the Kalgan railway north of Peking, but is probably more difficult to negotiate.

From the pass there is a drop of a few hundred feet into an open cultivated valley, that of the Tung Ho, flowing down from the south-western slopes of T'aipai Shan. This stream forms one of the headwaters of the great Szechuan River, the Chialing Chiang, which joins the Yangtzu at Chungking, so that though one has crossed the main range of the Ch'inling Shan and the Yangtzu Yellow River divide, one is not yet in the basin of the Han. The easiest line for the railway from here will probably be found to lie down the Chialing Chiang into Szechuan (though the latter flows mostly through precipitous gorges), thus not entering the

487 133 Han valley like the main road does. The trail runs S.W. down this valley through fields of wheat and maize past several villages, such as Huangniu P'u, Hunghua P'u, and Ts'aoliang Yi, in any of which a halt can be made. The Tung Ho is here, in summer, already a fair-sized mountain torrent, only just fordable, and is joined by several tributary torrents from the wooded mountains on either side. Between Ts'aoliang Yi and Feng Hsien, a distance of 70 li, the river runs mostly through winding gorges, with the path, a good mule-trail, ledged in the cliff over the water.

[361] [563] Feng Hsien, a third class district city, consists of one long street with a certain amount of life in it owing to the traffic on the high road. It lies hidden by poplars in a pretty cultivated valley. The confines of Kansu are not far off and there seem to be a good many Kansu Mahomedans in the district. There is plenty of loess in the Tung valley round Feng Hsien, though it is on the southern side of the Ch'inling watershed. There is not, so far as I know, any loess in the Han basin, but it may be noticed in the valleys of the headwater streams of the Chialing Chiang both here and above Li Hsien in Kansu, and doubtless in other places too. The presence of this loess south of the watershed range, which further east forms a barrier to and is the southern limit of this formation, seems to require a good deal of explaining; if the loess was deposited by water the fact that the relative height of the watershed above the ground north of it is so much lower in the west than in the east, may perhaps account for it.

484 We met a good deal of traffic on this road, in contrast to the empty trails of Northern Shensi, consisting of strings of coolies and pack-mules carrying tea, umbrellas, iron, etc., from Szechuan and the Han valley to Hsian and the towns of the Wei basin; when we got into Szechuan the contrast was still more marked, and the traffic was practically an endless procession of carrying coolies going both ways; and this in spite of the fact that Northern Szechuan abounds in brigands too, but apparently of a less formidable character than those of Northern Shensi.

487 133 At Feng Hsien the trail leaves the Tung River, which flows S.W. into Kansu, and turns up the mountain side to the south, reaching the pass, the Feng Ling (6300 feet) after

a two to three hours' climb. My heights for these passes, obtained, like all the rest on my maps, from aneroid observations compared with an occasional boiling-point thermometer reading, are lower than those usually given; but in the most modern maps of China Hanchung is assigned a height of 2000 feet, which is probably 500 feet too much, and in one good map Mien Hsien further west is given as 1800 feet odd, thus causing the Han River to flow up hill between the two cities; so that there is room for argument on the subject all round. From the Feng Ling there is a fine view to the west over the cultivated slopes of the Tung valley backed by higher mountains on the Kansu border, and to the south-east over the wooded limestone ranges of the Ch'inling Shan. After running along the mountain side for a short distance the path drops steeply into a gorge which leads down to the village of Sanch'a Yi, an old posting stage, lying at the confluence of two streams some 2000 feet below the pass and 50 li from Feng Hsien, and following down this valley, where rice fields and some loess re-appear, for another hour's march, reaches the village of Liufeng Kuan. This stream is a tributary of the Tung Ho, so that one is still on the head-waters of the Chialing Chiang. Liufeng Kuan is the head-quarters of a deputy magistrate under Feng Hsien, and we passed the night comfortably in his yamen.

The trail, which has hitherto run S.W. all the way from the Wei valley, now turns S.E. up a winding ravine, leading into the heart of the Ch'inling Shan, the village of Nanhsing in Liupa district being reached after about two hours' march. This place is half-way between Feng Hsien and Liupa T'ing, and provides accommodation for the traveller who wants to cover the distance (180 li) in two stages. Four hours' march up the valley, which contracts to a gorge hemmed in by densely-wooded mountains, brings one to the pass, the Ch'aikuan Ling (5500 feet), which leads over the divide into the Han basin. The Ch'inling ranges are seen at their best round the Ch'aikuan Ling, where the rocky precipices and densely-wooded mountain slopes, clear mountain torrents, and narrow fertile ravines combine to form a landscape of great beauty. Though the ascent to the pass is by easy gradients the descent is precipitous, and

● 487 a railway following the main road (which could avoid the more formidable Feng Ling by a détour down the Tung 133 valley and up the tributary to Liufeng Kuan) would presumably require a long tunnel, and would meet with many more difficulties following down the gorge to Liupa [346] and beyond. Some five li below the pass lies the Changliang Miao, beautifully situated at the junction of two wooded ravines, where we passed the night. This is one of the finest temples in China, built, I believe, in the Han Dynasty, and is well known amongst the Chinese; one would have liked to remain there a week.

361 From Changliang Miao (also known as Miao T'aitzu) the path runs down a winding gorge for the rest of the way to Liupa, a distance of 40 li. The latter, formerly a T'ing, and now a third class Hsien, is a picturesque little place, almost filling a narrow valley hidden away on the southern slopes of the Ch'inling Shan, its situation exactly resembling that of Huayang further east on the road to Fop'ing. The city is practically empty, the life of the place being concentrated in a suburb outside the south-east wall.

487 From Liupa to Paoch'eng in the Han valley plain is a distance of about 180 li, which can be covered in two long 133 marches, the trail running all the way down a winding gorge, occasionally cutting off corners by crossing low spurs. The going is most of the way very rough and rocky. Some three hours' march below Liupa the stream joins another much larger one flowing down from the southern slopes of T'aipai Shan, called the Pao Shui; up this stream lies a very rough trail to Mei Hsien in the Wei valley, crossing a shoulder of T'aipai Shan by a high pass. Several villages living on the traffic of this great highway are passed in the gorge, T'iehfotien, Matao Yi (the half-way stage), Erhshihli P'u, and Ch'ingch'iao Yi, in any of which a halt can be made. As one approaches the plain, the gorge, instead of opening out, becomes narrower, the cliffs more precipitous, and the track more rocky; and just when the weary traveller is beginning to look forward to the end of the stage, the gorge becomes impassable, and the path ascends for several hundreds of feet by flights of irregular stone steps, winds round the top of a spur, the Chit'ou Kuan, and drops straight down on to Paoch'eng Hsien, lying on the edge of the Han valley plain.

508 hands of Peking and the Northern Generals, when it was over; and the power of the North to retain in its hands the nominal government of the country, though it has so far proved itself incapable of subduing the South and the South West in a military sense, remains the only decisive and stable factor in the situation.

● 487 From Paoch'eng to Mien Hsien is a distance of 90 li by a good road up the Han valley plain, dotted with many
491 prosperous hamlets and villages; at the time of our passage it was largely under cotton where the land did not permit of irrigation for rice. Fifty li out a tributary river from the north is crossed by an iron chain suspension bridge and the large village of Huangsha P'u on the banks of the Han is reached. Further on another river from the mountains to the north has to be crossed by a ford, and though it was now the rainy season, the magistrate of Mien Hsien, who was travelling with us, assured us that its passage would present no difficulties, as he had crossed it coming to meet us on the previous day. But it had been raining all day, and rivers in China are wont to increase and decrease in size with extraordinary rapidity. When we reached this particular stream we found, instead of the ford a foot deep, which we had been led to expect, a roaring torrent deeper than a man's height. A dilapidated little temple was discovered near by in which we made shift to camp for the night while waiting for the rain to stop and the waters to subside; but before darkness fell the magistrate's efforts resulted in a boat being secured, and we packed up again and started off to try and reach Mien Hsien that night. The passage of the river was a long business, but everything was got over in the end, and we continued our journey in the dark. The path seemed to run more or less along the banks of the Han, into which I nearly rode on more than one occasion, past
438 the township of Ts'aiyuan Chen, which is a larger place than the district city and evidently a trading centre connected with the junk traffic on the river; and ten li further on the East Gate of Mien Hsien is reached, where we arrived about nine in the evening, wet through and tired out.

[234] Mien Hsien, a second class district city, lies at the
133 extreme western end of the cigar-shaped Hanchung plain, which extends eastwards to below Yang Hsien. The out-
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lying ranges of the Ch'inling Shan here meet the mountains 133 which separate the Han valley from Szechuan and bring 487 the plain abruptly to an end. There is some gold in the sands of the Han, as in almost all the rivers of Western China; [135] but whereas the sources of many of the latter, and therefore the hills from which the gold comes, lie far off on the Tibetan plateau, those of the Han lie close at hand in these mountains, which ought, therefore, to be worth prospecting; they are said to be rich in other minerals as well.

The next regular stage on this road is one of 90 li to the village of Tai-an Yi. The trail runs west up the Han River, which here flows in a perfectly straight gorge, for 45 li to the village of Hsinwan P'u, which is of interest as the head of navigation for small boats; the Han is thus navigable for practically its entire course. The porterage west to the [484] Chialing Chiang, which is also navigable, is only two or three marches over a low divide to the village of Yangp'ing Kuan, and the road is naturally a busy one, and carries much traffic between Shensi, Szechuan, and Kansu. At Hsinwan P'u the path leaves the Han for a time, passing through broken hills cultivated with maize and rice and dotted with the useful wood-oil tree, eventually returning to the river and following up its valley to reach Tai-an Yi, an old posting stage. The Han is remarkable for the suddenness with which it springs into existence as a navigable river. At Mien Hsien in the summer it is already a large stream; while one march further west, at Tai-an, it is a mere streamlet, and one is within a few hours of its source. At the other extreme are the two other chief rivers of Shensi, the Wei and the Lo, which, rising one in Central Kansu and the other on the Ordos border, are only navigable for short distances above their confluences with the Yellow River near T'ungkuan. The contrast is typical of China north and south of the Ch'inling Shan.

Above Tai-an the path turns south up the head-waters of the Han, now only a few inches deep. Beyond the hamlet of K'uanch'uan P'u, 30 li out, the valley narrows to a ravine, which leads an hour's march further on to a pass, the Wuting Kuan (about 4000 feet); whence the trail descends through a ravine in the jungle-clad mountains, past the hamlet of Tishih P'u, till it debouches into a larger

133 valley and reaches the town of Ningchiang, formerly a
487 Chou, and now a second class Hsien.

Ningchiang is a picturesque little place lying surrounded by rice fields in an isolated valley in the mountains near the Szechuan border. It is still in the basin of the Han, and a railway from Hanchung along the line of the main road into Szechuan could avoid the Wuting Pass by following the valley of its stream. There would be greater difficulties in crossing the divide into Szechuan, though these mountains are not in this neighbourhood to be compared with the Ch'inling Shan as a barrier to communication, being only about half as high.

From Ningchiang to Kuangyuan in Szechuan is a distance of 230 li, which is usually divided into three stages, 70 li to Chaoch'ang Pa, 70 li to Ch'aot'ien Chen, and 90 li to Kuangyuan; but as elsewhere along this road villages are numerous, and the traveller can make his own stages. Leaving Ningchiang the trail runs up the valley to the S.W., which ends 40 li out in an easy pass (3300 feet), being the divide between the Han and Chialing basins. From the pass there is a drop of a few hundred feet into a little rice valley enclosed by wooded hills which leads down to the village of Huangpa Yi, 50 li from Ningchiang. The path here leaves the stream, which flows south, and, crossing a spur, drops steeply into the gorge of a stream flowing down from a high range to the west. At the point where this gorge debouches on to a larger valley, 15 li from Huangpa Yi, there is a barrier wall and a gate, indicating the Shensi-Szechuan frontier, and a few li further down this valley the village of Chaoch'ang Pa is reached. Here we parted from our friends the Shensi officials, who had looked after us so well for the past four months, and with whom we had undergone many a hardship. One of these gentlemen, who acted as business manager of the expedition and who throughout displayed great powers of organization as well as capacity for enduring personal discomforts and hardships, is shown in the accompanying photograph trying a little Szechuan stallion[1]. Having served as district magistrate for

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231 [1] These Szechuan ponies though very small are exceedingly well built and show a great deal of breeding; they are useful on the paved paths and stone steps of Szechuan to which they are accustomed, and which are fatal to the larger and heavier built ponies of Kansu and Mongolia.

many years in various parts of Shensi, his local knowledge 133
and experience were of the greatest assistance, while his 487
talents ranged from shooting mountain goat in the Ch'inling
Shan to the writing of Chinese poetry.

Leaving Chaoch'ang Pa a spur is crossed to avoid a bend in the stream, and the path then runs down the open valley, good going at last after days of rocky scrambles, for 40 li to the village of Shenhsuan Yi, another old posting station and the head-quarters of a deputy magistrate under Kuangyuan. A little further on down the valley a curious natural phenomenon occurs, the valley coming suddenly to an end, and the stream flowing under a mountain spur through a tunnel in the limestone, to reappear in a deep gorge half a mile further on. The path ascends this spur by flights of stone steps, and then, crossing to the other side of the valley, runs along the mountain side several hundreds of feet above the gorge of the stream for the rest of the way to Ch'aot'ien Chen, a large village lying on the banks of the Chialing Chiang. The latter flows swiftly in a deep gorge in the mountains; and on the practicability of this gorge for railway construction appears to depend the possibility of finding a comparatively easy route for a railway into Szechuan from the Wei valley; for it is by this gorge that the Chialing Chiang pierces all those intricate ranges on the borders of Shensi, Kansu, and Szechuan, containing the head-waters of the Han, which are connected with the Ch'inling Shan in such a manner as to render their passage by a railway elsewhere extremely difficult.

From Ch'aot'ien to Kuangyuan, a distance of 90 li, the path is ledged in one of the cliffs of the gorges of the Chialing Chiang; but it is possible to do this stage by water, and as the magistrate had kindly prepared some boats, we were only too glad at this stage of our long journey to avail ourselves of so restful a method of travel. The river was high and the current very rapid, so that we covered the distance in less than four hours, instead of the nine or ten it would have taken us by road.

Kuangyuan, a second class district city, lies in a small 133
plain formed by the junction of a tributary with the Chialing 487
Chiang. It is considered an important place owing to its
position at the point where the big road from the north 361

[361] debouches into Szechuan and where another road emerges
• 487 from Kansu *via* P'ik'ou. Being a mountainous border district it is full of brigands, who do not, however, seem so
133 formidable or so destructive to trade as their colleagues in *Northern Shensi; at any rate much traffic continues on the* big road.

We were now at the end of July, and as we emerged from the higher mountains of Shensi into Szechuan the
[136] heat became daily more terrific. Mosquitoes too, which are not noticeable in Kansu at all owing to the elevation, and which only begin to be bad in Shensi towards the autumn, became daily more voracious.

From Kuangyuan to Chaohua is a short march of 55 li. down the left bank of the Chialing Chiang, which here winds a good deal between more open mountain slopes. The
[491] river is crossed by a ferry to reach Chaohua, a small third class district city, built on a point of land at the confluence of the Chialing Chiang and a large tributary called the Pai Ho from Kansu. These rivers have cut deep narrow valleys in the precipitous mountains, which seem to run in all directions.

Leaving Chaohua the road climbs to the top of a ridge between the two rivers and continues along the summit in a westerly direction for 40 li with finally a descent to the village of Tashumu, whence it ascends another ridge leading S.W. The trail is here a good paved path, ascending and descending where necessary by flights of stone steps, and the march along the summits of the ridges affords a series of fine views over the surrounding mountains. Seventy li from Chaohua the path drops steeply into the gorge of a stream flowing north, up which it continues for another hour, passing through a gate in a remarkable defile under steep precipices of conglomerate rock, to reach the large
[361] village of Chienmen Kuan, the seat of a deputy magistrate under Chien Chou.

On the next day's march the path follows up the valley for a short distance, and then climbs again on to a ridge which leads in a south-westerly direction. The paved path is much of the way bordered by venerable trees hundreds of years old, whose welcome shade accompanies one at intervals right through these mountains for several days' march. The views from the ridge are again extensive. On the right hand lies the peculiar range of mountains trending from S.W. to N.E. which was crossed on the preceding day by the defile of Chienmen Kuan; on their southern face these mountains have an easy slope, but on the northern side fall away in rock precipices, giving the impression of having been tossed up by some internal convulsion. This formation extends as far as one can see in either direction, and may also be noted in the ranges south of Ningchiang. On the left hand lies the much broken hill country of soft red sandstone, sometimes called the red basin of Szechuan, into which the defile of Chienmen Kuan gives access from the N.W. Beyond the village of Hanyang P'u, 25 li out, there is a descent and then an ascent on to another ridge, which is followed southwards until it ends with a steep drop to the city of Chien Chou, now called Chienko Hsien, a picturesque little place lying at the bottom of the narrow valley of the Chien Shui, a tributary of the Chialing Chiang, 65 li from Chienmen Kuan. The high ranges on one's right now bear away to the west, and the mountains become lower and flatter; but in this part of Szechuan, as elsewhere outside of the Chengtu plain, there is scarcely any level ground to be seen.

From Chien Chou to the next district city, Tzutung Hsien, is two stages of 80 li each, through complicated hill country intersected by a maze of little narrow valleys. The road is the same paved path shaded with ancient trees, and shows great engineering skill on the part of its designers, whoever they may have been, in the manner it threads its way through this difficult country. It is perhaps the most famous road in China, and it certainly deserves such a reputation. It was probably constructed by the Emperor Shih Huangti about B.C. 200 to facilitate his conquest of what is now Szechuan. Climbing out of the valley of the Chien Shui and crossing a ridge, the trail drops into a gorge, only to climb out again immediately, and winding round a spur S. and S.W., descends to the village of Liukou, 40 li from Chien Chou, at the junction of two streams flowing south. Here it ascends again, and winding along a ridge for 20 li reaches the head of a valley, crosses the divide, and follows down another ridge, with finally a steep drop to

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reach the large village of Wulien Yi, the end of the stage, lying at the junction of two valleys. From Wulien Yi there is a gradual ascent again until the top of another ridge is reached, along which the road winds, past the half-way village of Shangting P'u, and a fine temple in a grove of trees called Ta Miao, until it descends by a long easy gradient to Tzutung Hsien, lying in a rather more open valley sloping S.W. The hills, which grow steadily less formidable as one proceeds south on this road, are now quite low, and the mountains to the N.W. are almost out of sight.

The red basin of Szechuan appears to be an old plateau of red sandstone worn down by the action of water into a maze of hills and valleys in the same way as the loess. This formation is, however, by no means confined to Szechuan, for a vast extent of country, stretching all the way from Honan through Southern Shensi and Kansu to Hsining and the Kokonor, is composed of the same red sandstone, which in the west everywhere forms the southern limit to the loess.

At Tzutung we encountered the old joke of the North Gate closed to keep the rain out and had considerable difficulty in apprising the magistrate of our arrival and effecting an entrance.

Crossing the river outside Tzutung by a fine stone bridge, over which three motor cars might have been driven abreast, though the paved road leading to and from it is only a couple of feet wide, the trail winds westwards through the cultivated red hills to the township of Weich'eng, the end of the stage of 60 li; and on the following day continues through the same country, winding through the hills and following along undulating ridges for 65 li, to reach Mien Chou, now called Mienyang Hsien, a large and crowded first-class district city on the Fu River.

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We were now practically out of the mountains and not far from the northern end of the Chengtu plain. From Mien Chou the road runs through low hills for 90 li to reach Lochiang Hsien, whence it descends to Têyang Hsien on the plain, and continues through Han Chou and Hsintu Hsien to Chengtu. These district cities, Lochiang, Têyang, Han Chou, and Hsintu are all rich and populous centres, the like of which are not to be found in the whole of Shensi

and Kansu, situated short marches of 50 li one from the 487 • other. The Chengtu plain, notoriously one of the most 133 fertile and thickly populated regions in the world, was one 361 vast rice field, the grain nearly ripe, and promising, as usual, an enormous harvest. The most lucrative posts in the whole territorial administrative system of China are said to be the district magistracies on the Chengtu plain in Szechuan and in parts of Kuangtung, which are alleged to be more desirable from a monetary point of view than a Taoyinship.

Having left Chengtu five or six years previously shortly 361 after it had been looted and partly burned during the 669 troubles following on the Revolution of 1911, we now returned to find it once more in ruins, with street after street of wealthy shops and residences burnt down to heaps of rubble as the result of recent street-fighting between the Szechuanese and the Yunnan and Kueichou troops. Chengtu is incomparably the finest, richest, and most populous native city I know of in China, but it has known but little peace since the Revolution. Szechuan, the most 000 fertile and thickly populated province in the Republic, lies in an unfortunate position between the North and the South, and has frequently been the bone of contention between the respective protagonists, the Peking Government and the Yunnanese, during the long drawn out and indecisive struggle of recent years. The Szechuanese themselves incline naturally towards the South and their fair province is in every respect a portion of the South-West; but the Yangtzu waterway and the overland road from Shensi render them very liable to invasion by the Northerners. Further the abundance of labour, rice, and all kinds of supplies make the province a most suitable battle ground, where both Yunnanese and Northerners can practise the latest Japanese manœuvres and test their newest foreign machine guns at a minimum cost to themselves. The Szechuanese are not a warlike race, and have not in the past played an important part in these civil wars; though recently signs have not been wanting that they propose to make a change in this respect in the future. As regards numbers they are in a position to swamp all the rest, while they also have the great advantage of a modern arsenal at Chengtu.

The Yunnanese have played a very large part in the

CHAPTER VIII

FROM HSIAN FU IN SHENSI TO LANCHOU FU IN KANSU BY THE GREAT WEST ROAD

The Great West Road—Hsienyang—Lich'uan—Ch'ienchou—Yungshou—Pinchou—Ch'angwu—Kansu border—Chingchou—P'ingliang—Kansu Mahomedans—Wat'ing—The late General T'ung Fu-hsiang—The Liupan Shan—Lungte—Chingning—Rest-houses and inns—Brackish water—Trail of desolation left by Mahomedan campaigns—Huining—Disadvantages of being a magistrate on the high road—Beacon towers—Anting—Kantsao Tien—Lanchou—Kansu climate—Wool factory—The Governor of Kansu—The C.P.O.—Missionaries—Recent events in Kansu.

From Hsian Fu in Shensi to Lanchou Fu in Kansu by 133
the Great West Road is a distance of about 1400 li (say 487
425 miles), which is covered in eighteen to twenty days.
If the road from Hsian to Chengtu and Lassa be considered the most important overland route in China, this one, from Hsian to Lanchou and Kashgar, has every claim to rank next. Unlike the former, which is only a mule trail, it is a cart track all the way. Passing from the coast into the heart of North-Western China through a natural gap in the mountains formed by the valley of the Wei River, it continues into Central Asia along the narrow strip of fertile country occupied by the Chinese between the mountains of Northern Tibet and the deserts of Mongolia. It is both one of the longest and most ancient highways in the world.

The first stage, a short one of 50 li across the plain to
Hsienyang Hsien, crossing the Wei River by a cart ferry [491]
just before getting in, is the same as the first march on the Chengtu road. Outside Hsienyang the Szechuan and Kansu roads bifurcate, the latter leading north-west across the undulating loess plain for 70 li to Lich'uan Hsien, whence it continues for another short march of 40 li across similar
country, ascending gradually, to Ch'ien Chou. During the 241
month of May these plains are covered as far as the eye can reach with healthy-looking crops of wheat and lucerne; the latter, a most useful crop in Western Shensi and Eastern
Kansu, is used for fodder; in the Han valley, however, a [246]

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241 sort of veitch or lucerne is grown in the dry rice fields in the winter and ploughed into the ground at the time of the spring flooding as manure for the rice crop.

• 487 Ch'ien Chou lies near the north-western edge of the Wei valley plains, and the road now ascends steadily over 133 loess hills for 90 li to Yungshou Hsien, lying just under the summit of a loess clad range which here bars the way to the west. The corn fields in the neighbourhood were full of pheasants, though there was little or no cover apart from the standing crops. The times being at the moment fairly peaceful, we met a constant stream of the large carts which ply on this road, one animal in the shafts and three in front, mostly laden with the famous Lanchou water pipe tobacco, which is exported from Kansu to all parts of China. Leaving Yungshou, half an hour's walk uphill brings one to the top of the ridge (4500 feet), whence there is a steep descent into a stony valley leading down to a hamlet half-way to Pin Chou. Here the road ascends again through the loess to a plateau intersected by ravines, down one of which it descends [361] steeply to reach the valley of the Ching Ho and the district city of Pin Chou, 70 li from Yungshou.

The Ching River is here a shallow mountain stream and quite different to the torrent of liquid mud met with lower down; apparently it assumes the latter character after its confluence with the Huan Ho, which flows down from the loess of N.E. Kansu. The road runs up the cultivated valley of the Ching Ho, here about a mile wide and bounded by cliffs of loess and sandstone dotted with caves. Twenty li out [346] the temple of Tafo Ssu is passed on the left hand, where a number of cave temples have been cut out of the rock in one of which there is a huge figure of Buddha. Two hours' march further on the road leaves the valley and climbs up on to the loess plateau, across which it runs for the rest of the way to Ch'angwu Hsien, a little city floating in a sea of wheat, 80 li from Pin Chou.

From Ch'angwu Hsien to Ching Chou is a long day's march called 100 li, the Kansu border being crossed at a village 30 li out. The road runs across the plateau, winding to and fro to avoid the cracks and fissures in the loess, the beginnings of ravines, cañons and valleys. It is lined with trees much of the way, and often these are seen to lead to the edge of a precipitous cañon, which has engulfed the road during recent years, and [illegible] continue again on the further side, while the track now in [illegible] winds round the head of the ravine. All through the loess country of Shensi and Kansu it is the same story, the track winding about to avoid the rifts, which are ever widening and working backwards by the collapse of their vertical walls. We were met on the provincial border by some Kansu officials and a couple of dozen Mahomedan braves, picturesque looking warriors mounted on handsome Kansu ponies, from whose appearance it was evident we were entering a new country. All Chinese in the North can ride after a fashion; but a Kansu Mahomedan, a Mongol, or a Tibetan sits his pony as though born to the saddle. Thus escorted we dropped by a long descent of ten li through a gully in the loess to Ching Chou (now Chingch'uan Hsien), and found ourselves once more in the valley of the Ching Ho. 487 /133 [492]

From Ching Chou to P'ingliang Fu is a distance of 130 li, which can be divided into two marches by halting at the village of Paishui Yi, 75 li out. The road, a broad tree-lined highway, runs up the valley of the Ching Ho, which is well cultivated and populated. The trees along this road, which extend on and off all the way from Hsian to Lanchou, are said to have been planted by the order of the great General Tso, the conqueror of the Mahomedans, and if so, all travellers in summer time have reason to be thankful to him for the welcome shade they afford. At Paishui Yi we 634 were met by the P'ingliang magistrate, one of the very best district officers we came across in all our journeys, who [691] proceeded that same evening to take advantage of his presence in the village to try a case in the courtyard of the rest-house in which we were stopping; no red tape or ceremony of any kind, but a quick, straightforward hearing. Kansu is an old-fashioned and conservative province, and at the time of our visit was jogging along in much the same way as under the Manchus, without having adopted many of the new methods of the Republic. This magistrate was a regular territorial official *de carrière*, the son of an official, and, though still quite young, had served for some years as a magistrate under the previous regime. Consequently he was thoroughly conversant with his work, and compared and Haich'eng to Chinchi (Ningling) and Ninghsia. The 563 Chinese consider those in the Southern area, who are of more recent Turki origin, to be the more dangerous and fanatical today. In a secluded valley near P'ingliang resides 792 a sort of Mahomedan saint, who has great influence not only in Kansu but also in Yunnan, and who undoubtedly commands the services of thousands, or perhaps tens of thousands, of armed Mahomedans; he is not one of the regular Moslem leaders, who are referred to in later chapters; and there seems to be some sort of mystery about him, which it was not our business to enquire into.

The next stage from P'ingliang is one of 90 li to Wat'ing, 487 ● a walled fort and posting stage at the foot of the Liupan 133 pass. The road runs up the valley, which beyond a half-way village with inns contracts to a gorge, scrub-covered mountains of shale and sandstone taking the place of the cultivated loess hills. Pheasants were thick here, and so tame that one had to throw stones at them to make them fly. Wat'ing is rather an important point as the roads to Lanchou and Ninghsia here bifurcate (the latter *via* Kuyuan). We were met here by the magistrate of Kuyuan and also by a representative of the family of the late General T'ung Fu-hsiang, whose ancestral seat is in the neighbourhood. I have been told on more than one occasion by Chinese that T'ung Fu-hsiang was not a Mahomedan at all, but a Chinese General commanding Moslem troops; perhaps he was considered a Chinese because he fought against the Mahomedans in the great rebellion. The following is a sketch of the career of this celebrated individual, who came into contact with foreigners by leading his Mahomedan troops to the attacks on the Legations in Peking in 1900.

T'ung Fu-hsiang was a native of Kuyuan in Eastern 669 Kansu. In the big rebellion of 1864–1873 he figured 563 prominently as a military chief on the Chinese side under General Tso, and it was he who captured the rebel stronghold of Chinchi on the Yellow River near Ninghsia, an event which was the turning-point in the campaign. This was the foundation of his fortunes, as he was enriched with the confiscated estates of rebels, and from that time on counted as one of the most prominent and influential leaders in Kansu. Subsequently he fought in Central Asia against

PLATE XXV

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DEPARTURE FROM P'INGLIANG

487

APPROACH TO THE LIUPAN SHAN PASS

[FACING P. 110]

669 563 Yakub Beg. In 1895 he had risen to be commander-in-chief of the Kansu forces and despatched troops to aid in the suppression of the Mahomedan rebellion near Sining in that year. In 1900 he commanded an army of Kansu braves in the attacks on the Legations, and subsequently arranged for the safety of the Imperial Court during its flight to Hsian Fu. Being proscribed by the Foreign Powers after the collapse of the Boxer movement he was cashiered and sent back to Kansu in disgrace, where he resided on his large estates in some state till his death about ten years ago. His rôle was loyalty to the Manchus through thick and thin, and his example in this respect has been followed more recently by the other Mahomedan leaders, who were ready to remain faithful to the cause of the fallen dynasty even after the abdication in 1912. Had Yuan Shih-k'ai not been at the head of affairs then, and had T'ung Fu-hsiang still been alive, the Mahomedan North West would perhaps have refused to accept the Republic, with disastrous results to the neighbouring provinces.

487 133 From Wat'ing the road runs up a ravine to the west, reaching the foot of the Liupan Shan after 15 li, whence it ascends by a series of zigzags to the summit of the pass, a grassy ridge about 9000 feet high. There were many big carts making the ascent, a most arduous business effected by relays of animals. Here again, as often on our journeys, we had reason to congratulate ourselves on having a caravan of good pack mules instead of carts. The Liupan Shan is a prominent range of mountains rising far above the loess, which crosses Kansu from N.W. to S.E.; it is probably a continuation of the chief range of the Nan Shan, which is crossed by the main road west of Lanchou at the Wushao Ling (10,000 feet) and through which the Yellow River breaks its way in a series of precipitous gorges between Lanchou and Chungwei. From the pass there is a steep drop of about a thousand feet, and the road then descends through a dreary barren valley to Lungtê Hsien, a most miserable little city almost entirely in ruins, 50 li from Wat'ing. The loess country west of the Liupan Shan is much more barren and desiccated than on the P'ingliang [243] side, and round Lungtê the poor-looking wheat crops were only just showing above ground towards the end of May.

Most of the magistrates' yamens throughout Northern and 634
North-Eastern Kansu were dreadfully dilapidated, but the one here was about the worst we saw, being scarcely habitable, and in keeping with the rest of this ruined little city. The magistrate complained that the inhabitants of his district were poor to the verge of starvation.

I was told that the road across the Liupan Shan was made by General Tso to facilitate communications during 491
the campaigns against the Mahomedans, the former route, which is still used to a limited extent, passing from Wat'ing to Kuyuan, and thence *via* Haich'eng and Chingyuan to Lanchou.

From Lungtê to Chingning Chou is a march of 90 li 487
down the valley, which is cultivated but very arid-looking, and dotted with wretched farms and hamlets. There are no 133
trees except those which line the road. The arid climate of North China is often ascribed to the destruction of the forests by the Chinese in ancient days, but it is doubtful whether the loess was ever covered by trees owing to its peculiar consistency; it is certainly quite unsuited for the growth of trees nowadays. Further on the valley becomes quite barren, the ground being covered with a white alkaline efflorescence, and 15 li from Chingning it narrows to a gorge with the path ledged in the hillside, eventually debouching on to a more fertile valley where irrigation is practised. Chingning, a considerable market town, lies in this valley.

On the following march the road turns up a side ravine, [443]
climbs a long steep hill to a pass in the loess, and descends through a maze of loess hills to a valley which leads down to the village of Kaochia P'u (45 li); it continues to follow this valley for another hour's march and then turns north-west up a long narrow defile in the loess, a weary trek with repeated little steep descents and ascents in and out of side nullahs, for the rest of the way to Ch'ingchia Yi, 90 li from Chingning, a walled village and former posting stage and fort. These posting stages, with which we became so 485
familiar on the main roads of Kansu, are mostly provided with official rest-houses called *hsingt'ai*, in which we were usually quartered; though very dilapidated they provided quite good accommodation in the summer, being usually uninhabited and therefore free from smells. The

485 inns of Shensi and Kansu, which we very seldom used, are also not bad, being large and roomy, and constructed mainly with a view to the accommodation of plenty of animals in the courtyard. I have a particular aversion to the Szechuan inn, usually considered, especially by the Chinese, as providing the height of luxury on the road; they are always crowded in between the other houses of a narrow street, and invariably have the defect of placing the *shang fang* (the chief guest room) next door to the *mao fang*, a revolting arrangement for a night's rest, which the Chinese do not seem to object to.

271 Ch'ingchia Yi was the first place where we struck brackish water, and from here on to within two days of Lanchou I found it scarcely potable. This is a very real trial in the dry season in Central Kansu, and though in the course of our journeys brackish water was of frequent occurrence, we never became accustomed to it, and found it a great hardship to be greeted with a cup of salted tea at the end of a hot day on the road. After the rains have 312 fallen the water is said to sweeten. We were warned of this, of course, but were told that the Mahomedans collected sweet rainwater in specially prepared pits, called *chiao shui*; but owing to lack of rain most of these pits were dry, or contained only a little evil-looking liquid loess mud. I believe that water in pure loess is usually brackish, but in most parts streams or wells are available in the underlying rock; this portion of Central Shensi, however, is in the heart of the loess watershed between the Wei and Yellow rivers, lying mostly over 6000 feet above sea level, and it is the streams themselves which are the worst to drink. I thought I did not know what real thirst was till crossing Central Kansu at the driest season of the year, but later on, when traversing a portion of the Alashan desert further west in early August, we longed even for the salted tea of Huining.

487 From Ch'ingchia Yi the road continues to ascend the same defile for ten li, crosses a pass in the loess, and descends 133 by a similar ravine leading west. Several hamlets mostly in ruins are passed, including the walled posting stage of Chaichia Tsui. These ruins, now more than fifty years old, 669 which become increasingly frequent as one proceeds west, are part of the trail of desolation left by General Tso's

victorious army all the way from Shensi to Turkestan, their 669
method of dealing with the rebellion being to massacre the inhabitants and reduce to heaps of ruins every Mahomedan habitation they came across. As the male Mahomedans were mostly scouring the country in marauding bands, they met with little difficulty in doing so. Chinese rebellions have in the past of course always been suppressed in this manner, and indeed could probably not have been suppressed otherwise. Fifteen li from Huining the valley contracts into a 487
gorge, and the road runs down the bed of the stream, a brackish trickle of water, for the rest of the way. Huining 133
is a poor city lying in a region of arid valleys. Complaining of the hardships of life at his post, the magistrate informed us that in many parts of his district ordinary fuel was unobtainable, and the inhabitants were reduced to burning [372]
dried dung as in the deserts of Tibet and Mongolia. This arid region stretches away apparently to the north till it merges into the Ordos desert, a land of sand and camels. In addition to being such a miserably poor district, his post had the disadvantage of lying on this great road, and when an important personage, such as a Mongol prince or high Chinese functionary, passed by on his way to or from Turkestan, his passage would leave the unfortunate magistrate many hundreds of taels out of pocket, which he could ill afford. We were a very small party when travelling in Kansu and I hope we did not cost him anything; but I know that when we commenced our journeys in Shensi with a huge party we were a heavy burden on the people and officials of the districts through which we passed.

The next stage is a short one of 60 li to the walled posting stage of Hsikung Yi. The road runs down the Huining valley for 20 li, and then ascends a side ravine to the southwest for the rest of the way. The hamlets passed seemed more miserable and the country more desiccated than ever. All along this road, as on most of the bigger roads of Kansu, may be noticed groups of curious little towers every five to 718
ten li. It was a long time before we could get a satisfactory explanation of what these towers were intended for; so far as I know they are only to be seen on the roads of Kansu. We now learned that they were beacon towers, another relic of the rebellion and its suppression, by means of which

718 signals could be sent great distances in a very short space of time.

•487 From Hsikung Yi to Anting, another short stage of 60 li, the road follows up the ravine for ten li, and then climbs a 133 long steep hill by zigzags. On reaching the summit there is no immediate descent the other side, but the path winds along a high ridge with extensive views over the loess [36] mountains all around, finally dropping steeply to Anting in a valley running north-west. Anting Hsien (now known as Tinghsi) is an important district city lying at the junction of three valleys, and, commanding several roads north, south, east and west, was formerly an important military centre. There is more water available here, and consequently the country is much more fertile and the people quite well off. Loess country in this rainless region is either a desert or a garden according to the amount of water available for irrigation, and from here on to Lanchou, though the hills become more and more sterile, the irrigated valleys are wonderfully green and fertile.

From Anting to Lanchou is a march of four short stages of about 60 li each. The road runs down the valley past several prosperous hamlets for 45 li to the village of Ts'ank'ou whence it strikes west up a side valley to the posting station of Ch'enk'ou Yi, the end of the stage. From here it ascends a gully for a few li and then climbs a steep loess hill to reach the summit of a ridge along which it winds for three to four hours' march, with finally a steep descent to the large market village of Kantsao Tien, lying amongst fertile irrigated fields at the junction of three valleys. To the south-west rises a high range of mountains, beyond which lie Titao and the T'ao River. From here on to Lanchou the irrigated valleys, bounded by desert hills, are highly productive, and the crops several weeks ahead of those in the barren region we had traversed since crossing the Liupan Shan.

From Kantsao Tien a good road runs down the cultivated valley for 70 li to Chinchia Yai, a large village and likin [361] station, and the end of the stage. The district city of Chin Hsien lies just off the road, 25 li to the south. Leaving Chinchia Yai the valley soon contracts to a stony ravine, and after 20 li debouches suddenly on to the gorges of the Yellow River, which here rolls its turgid waters between precipitous

2: Teichman G-5 (1919) 1921 AF13 Northwest China AF13

granite walls. The path runs for a short distance along the river, and then enters a belt of sand hills from which it emerges on to the river again at the village of T'ungkuan P'o, lying at the entrance to the gorges. From here to Lanchou (20 li) the road is a broad highway up the open cultivated valley of the Yellow River. 487 133

Lanchou Fu, now officially known by the name of the district, Kaolan Hsien, is by far the most attractive of the provincial capitals of China I have visited. It is built along the right bank of the Yellow River at a point where the hills close in on the river, the valley expanding into small plains to the east and west. The greyish yellow city walls and towers blending with the yellow waters of the river and the desolate yellow grey hills all around, the whole relieved by the bright green of the irrigated fields in the valley, combine to form an attractive picture which will long remain with those on whom the deserts and mountains of the North West exercise their mysterious charm. The modern iron bridge across the Yellow River, constructed a few years ago by foreign engineers, is rather an eyesore, but its great utility more than makes up for its appearance. Across this bridge, which at the time of our visit was in a very decayed state as far as the woodwork was concerned, passes an almost incessant stream of traffic, carts, ponies, mules, camels, and sometimes yak, bound eastwards for China and westwards for Turkestan. So far as I know there are only three bridges across the Yellow River, this one, and the Peking-Hankow and Tientsin-Pukou railway bridges in Honan and Shantung; which is, however, a better record than the Yangtzu can show, the latter having no bridges across its course anywhere. The walls of Lanchou are well built and kept in good repair, and the whole city has an air of compact strength, comparative cleanliness, and prosperity. It was never taken by the Mahomedans during the rebellions of the past, and it was also one of the few provincial capitals to escape being looted by soldiers or mob during the revolution of 1911 and subsequent troubles, and its shops appear rich and well stocked. Owing to its situation at the junction of the Yellow River with the highway from China to Turkestan, as well as numerous other roads leading in various directions, it is by far the most important centre in 361 491 361 438

CHAPTER IX

FROM LANCHOU FU SOUTH TO CH'INCHOU AND THENCE WEST TO T'AOCHOU ON THE KOKONOR BORDER

Shani—Titao—Weiyuan—Kungch'ang—Ningyuan—Fuchiang—Ch'inchou—Schools, government and missionary—Li Hsien—Western end of Ch'inling Shan—Profusion of pheasants—Grass plateau—Modern maps of China—Min Chou—T'ao river valley—New T'aochou—Mahomedans on Kokonor border—Choni—Old T'aochou—Tibetan trade—The Min Shan—Mission work amongst Tibetans—Pneumonic plague.

We finally left Lanchou on June 9 for Ch'inchou, Minchou, 487
and T'aochou. The road runs due south, ascending a 133
narrow stony valley, for 40 li to reach the village of Akan
Chen, picturesquely situated in a wooded gorge. Most of [316]
the coal consumed in Lanchou comes from this neighbourhood, and the manufacture of pottery seems to be quite a [323]
local industry. We passed the night here, though the village was hard put to it to accommodate our moderate-sized party. On the following day the road ascends through a wooded ravine where pheasants are numerous for some 15 li to the top of the pass, and then descends for three hours' march through a barren rocky gorge to the hamlet of Chungpu, which is an alternative halting-place to Akan for breaking the 120 li from Lanchou to Shani into two stages. From here the road threads its way through barren hills of sandy loess for about 35 li to Shani, a wretched walled village recently promoted to the rank of district city under the new name of T'aosha Hsien. It is suitably named for the surroundings are almost desert, which is characteristic of the T'ao valley from here down to its junction with the Yellow River, and form a curious contrast to the thickly wooded slopes round Akan Chen.

From Shani to Titao Chou is a march of 90 li up the 312
T'ao River valley, which is here about a mile broad and
converted by irrigation from a desert into a market garden. 361
Numerous villages are passed, the largest being Hsintientzu and Hsink'ai P'u, 30 and 50 li out. Titao Chou, now Titao

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312 Hsien, surrounded by rich irrigated lands, is a city of some importance, occupying a strategic position between Lanchou Fu and the Mahomedan strongholds round Ho Chou. It [277] is also a centre of the water pipe tobacco industry and of the trade in lumber, the latter rafted down the T'ao River [313] from the forests of the Kokonor.

From Titao to Weiyuan Hsien is a distance of 110 li ● 487 across the watershed between the T'ao and Wei rivers, which can be divided into two marches by halting at the 133 hamlets of Yaotien or Ch'ingp'ing, where there are inns, 50 and 80 li out respectively. Leaving Titao the road runs up a shallow cultivated valley bounded by hills of red clay in an easterly and then a southerly direction for 80 li to the hamlet of Ch'ingp'ing, where the valley is a mere ravine. From here it ascends a grassy ridge which is followed for two hours' march to gain the watershed pass, and then drops steeply to Weiyuan Hsien. The railway from Hsian to Lanchou which, it is proposed, shall follow up the Wei valley, will here presumably require a tunnel through this watershed to reach the valley of the T'ao. Weiyuan is of some interest to the Chinese as lying on the headwaters of their historical river the Wei. We found it a small but well-kept city, rejoicing in a particularly progressive young [491] magistrate. The river is here quite small and easily fordable, and its valley though narrow is cultivated and has a prosperous appearance.

From Weiyuan to Kungch'ang is a march of 90 li by a good road down the valley, generally a mile or two wide, well cultivated, and bounded by bare hills. Numerous villages are passed, the largest being Shouyang Ch'eng, half way. Kungch'ang Fu, now known as Lunghsi Hsien, is a large city in extent, but having been destroyed during the Mahomedan rebellion is still half in ruins. Another march of 90 li, still down the valley, brings one to Ningyuan. Forty li out the hills close in on the valley which becomes barren [491] and stony. The Wei River is forded twice on this stage and also the Nan Ho, a large tributary from the south. The latter was in flood and gave us some trouble. Immediately after crossing the Nan Ho there is a steep ascent and descent over a ridge which blocks the valley at this point, followed by an hour's march down the open valley to Ningyuan.

Many villages are passed on this stage, the largest being Ssushihli P'u and Chaochiakengtzu, 40 and 50 li out respectively. Ningyuan (new name Wushan Hsien) is a pleasant little city lying in the irrigated valley of the Wei River producing heavy crops of corn and hemp. 487 • 133

From Ningyuan to Fuchiang is a long stage called 100 li. The road continues down the valley, crossing a loess ridge just before getting to the large market village of Lomen Chen, 30 li out. The valley on this stretch of the road is very fertile, thickly populated, and well timbered. Fuchiang is quite a wealthy town, and this part of Kansu is probably the richest in the province, with the exception perhaps of the Ninghsia plains. It used to be a centre for the opium trade, now more or less extinct. The poppy was formerly [274] cultivated extensively in all the irrigated areas in Kansu, and the product was considered the best native-grown opium in China and was in great demand in Peking, Tientsin, and North China generally.

At Fuchiang the road leaves the Wei valley and ascending a gorge in the loess hills, crosses a steep little pass and descends to the large village of Kuantzu Chen, 40 li out. From here it continues down this valley, that of a tributary of the Wei, passes through a stony gorge, and emerges at the village of Liushihli P'u, 60 li from Fuchiang, whence there is a good road through cultivated fields down the valley for the remaining 60 li to Ch'in Chou. The latter, now [361] known as T'ienshui Hsien, consists of no less than five cities built one alongside the other, and is one of the largest and most important towns in the province. A considerable trade is carried on with Shensi and Szechuan, the exports [438] consisting of the regular products of Kansu, such as wool, hides, deer's horns, furs, musk, rhubarb, mountain medicines, tobacco, and opium, and the imports of silk, tea, piece goods, etc. The Szechuanese element in the population is considerable, and the proximity of that province is in many ways noticeable. It is not a Mahomedan centre, but there [563] is a small community of Moslem merchants engaged as usual in the horse and cattle trade and in the export of hides to [438] Hankow. Two roads lead from here into Shensi, one *via* Hui Hsien to Hanchung, and the other *via* Ch'ingshui to Fenghsiang; two roads also lead into Szechuan, one *via*

487 133 Hui Hsien to the Chialing Chiang, and the other *via* Hsiho Hsien, Chieh Chou, and P'ik'ou; these are all mule trails.

Ch'in Chou is the seat of a Taoyin, a General, and a magistrate, by whom we were most hospitably entertained, 871 being lodged in the local middle school. The latter provided quite luxurious accommodation, consisting of remarkably fine spacious buildings. There were plenty of students too, and the popularity of the government schools was here, as elsewhere in this remote province, very apparent. English, nowadays the official foreign language of China, is taught. I am not in a position to give any opinion as to the standard of the work done in these middle schools in Kansu but it is evident that they are more popular than the missionary schools, which is perhaps hardly to be wondered at. Immensely beneficial as the educational work of the missionaries is to the Chinese, it has the disadvantage, from the Chinese point of view, of being adulterated with evangelistic effort; so that the student, athirst for Western knowledge, has to swallow the Christian powder skilfully hidden between layers of scientific jam. Then there is always the underlying feeling against the alien institution, and also the fact that all the missionaries who engage in educational work in China are not always well qualified to lead their pupils very far. In Kansu missionary schools exist in only a very small way; but in some provinces, notably Szechuan, large institutions have been established, including a university. These remain, however, like the Christian Church in China, purely foreign institutions for the Chinese under foreign management, and for that reason are not always appreciated by the Chinese as they doubtless deserve to be; the latter would probably prefer that the foreign teachers should offer their services in the government schools.

487 133 From Lanchou Fu we had so far been following one of the main trade routes of Kansu, but we now turned westwards *en route* for T'ao Chou on the Kokonor border, following a very rough mountain trail through the heart of the western extremity of the Ch'inling Shan. Our first objective was the little district city of Li Hsien, distant two days' march, lying on the headwaters of the Chialing Chiang and therefore in the basin of the Yangtzu.

Leaving Ch'in Chou the path runs up a bare valley due south for 15 li and then branches off up a side ravine 487 to the S.W., another road continuing south up the main valley towards Hui Hsien. After an hour or two's march 133 up this ravine the trail ascends a low pass, crosses a small valley, and immediately rises again to cross another low pass, whence it descends to the village of Kaomo Chen in the valley of a streamlet flowing from west to east. We were delayed [262] in Kaomo Chen for half a day by our mule train following the wrong path, and its poverty was evidenced by the fact that we could get nothing but unleavened cakes of maize to eat, the most unpalatable form of nourishment I have ever had to put up with in China, though very often the only food of the people in mountainous country. From here the trail ascends by easy gradients to a pass in the Yangtzu-Yellow River divide, a climb of less than an hour over grassy slopes devoid of trees, and then descends steeply to a valley running south-west The track follows down this stream for 20 li to the village of Lochia P'u, where it debouches into a broad and fertile valley, bounded by low cultivated hills of loess, the stream flowing from east to west. This stream is one of the headwaters of the Chialing Chiang, which flows through Szechuan to Chungking, and it is remarkable to find so much loess south of the divide. The latter formation may also be seen on the headwaters of the Shensi branch of the Chialing Chiang round Feng Hsien on the Hsian Chengtu road.

From Lochia P'u there is a remarkably good road down the open loess valley for two hours' march to the walled village of Yen Kuan, where there are said to be salt wells. The magistrate of Hsiho Hsien met us here, as we had entered his district; he said that a road branches off at this point to Hsiho and Chieh Chou and so to Szechuan. From Yen Kuan the road continues down the valley until within 20 li of Li Hsien, where it crosses a spur to avoid some gorges, and the loess formation comes to an end. Li Hsien [361] is a picturesque little city lying hidden away on the southern slopes of the Ch'inling Shan in a country of narrow fertile valleys, whose streams all go to form the headwaters of the Kansu branch of the Chialing Chiang. From here to Min Chou our route followed an unfrequented trail which penetrated the Ch'inling Shan in the most curious way,

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passing and repassing from one to the other side of the watershed. In this neighbourhood the Ch'inling ranges do not appear such a formidable barrier between the Yellow River and the Yangtzu as in the places where we had crossed them further east in Shensi, perhaps owing to the greater elevation of the country on either side; unfortunately my aneroids were temporarily out of action owing to an accident on this portion of the journey, so that we could not follow the heights. West of Min Chou the Yangtzu-Yellow River divide is continued by the magnificent Min Shan, a rocky and almost impassable barrier reaching in places above the line of perpetual snow; but there does not seem to be any well-defined barrier ridge joining this range to the Ch'inling Shan, and if railways ever reach this part of Kansu it should not prove very difficult to connect them up with the future lines of Northern Szechuan.

Leaving Li Hsien the trail leads up a narrow valley to the north-west for 40 li to the hamlet of Wuch'uanli, a most picturesque spot surrounded by wooded mountains, where we passed the night in a temple. An hour's march further on the path turns up a side ravine, crosses a low pass, and descends into another narrow valley trending from north to south. Ten li up this valley a few huts called Chiutientzu are reached, beyond which the trail turns up a side gorge and climbs steeply to reach the summit of the Fenshui Ling ("Watershed Pass"). The scenery in these mountains is very fine, and the country wild and uninhabited. From the pass the trail descends through a flat grassy valley and then through cornfields to reach the market village of Mawu Chen 60 li from Wuch'uanli. Here one is apparently again on the northern side of the Ch'inling Shan, the stream flowing north to join the Wei.

From Mawu Chen the path turns west up a narrow valley, which for profusion of pheasants beat every other locality we traversed in all our long journeys. The sides of the ravine were clothed in dense jungle while in the bottom were patches of cultivation with the corn ripening for harvest. These fields were literally alive with pheasants, which blundered up in flocks as one moved up the valley through the corn. Here, as often before in Shensi and Kansu, we could not fail to be struck by the absurdity of all

this game being untouched by the natives who not only 000
neglect all this excellent food lying to their hands, but also presumably lose quite a lot of corn eaten by the pheasants. In the eastern provinces where there is a foreign market and also the demand created by the companies which export frozen game (a demand which is a serious danger to the stocks of game in those parts) the Chinese wage an unceasing war against the pheasants with gun, net, and even poison. I have known Chinese hunters in the mountains of Northern Chihli who used to make good shooting with the prehistoric looking Chinese gun with its pistol stock, which discharges a stream of bits of old iron and gives the shooter a severe blow on the cheek-bone when it is fired; and I have also been out with Chinese hunting pheasants with a native dog and hawk. But I have never come across a native in the mountains of Kansu who took the least interest in the pheasants picking grain on his threshing floor.

Following up this ravine from Mawu Chen for some 30 487
li the trail crosses a small pass and descends to a few huts
called Shachin Kou, where one is apparently again on the 133
southern side of the watershed with the stream flowing south towards the Chialing Chiang. From here it turns west again up another wooded gorge, where we startled a couple of deer, too big, I think, to be roe, leading to an easy pass over grass-covered mountains. Here there is a sudden and complete change in the scenery, and the trail descends into a broad shallow valley, devoid of trees, and dotted with farmsteads and patches of cultivation. Crossing this valley, which slopes north and is apparently once more on the northern side of the watershed, past the village of Suluk'o (60 li from Mawu Chen), the track engages itself in another grassy valley leading west. At the head of this valley one emerges on to a treeless marshy plateau dotted with herds of cattle. We were here assailed by a rain storm, and though the season was the end of June it was bitterly cold; my aneroids being out of action I can only guess the height, which was perhaps 9000 feet. An hour's march across this plateau brought us to our destination for the night, the hamlet of Tachuangtzu, 80 li from Mawu Chen, where the black peaty soil was under cultivation to a limited extent.

516 As we rode into this little place,[1] cold, tired, and generally rather miserable, the entire visible population fell on their faces, since republican principles had not yet penetrated to this out-of-the-way spot, and they thought they were prostrating themselves before an "Imperial Mission." The headman had, however, prepared the best of the mud cabins for our accommodation, and we were soon warm and dry again, and engaged in disposing of some of the cock pheasants picked up *en route*.

487 A few li beyond Tachuangtzu the trail drops over the
edge of the plateau to reach the considerable village of
133 Ch'enchiachi, lying in a flat cultivated valley sloping north
and surrounded by grassy mountains. We halted here for the night owing to the rain, only having made ten li; quite good accommodation was secured in a farm house, but it was miserably cold. From here the road runs westwards across rolling grass country intersected by shallow cultivated valleys sloping north with sheep and cattle grazing on the hill slopes. This curious grass-covered plateau, the presence of which is entirely unexpected in a region of steep mountains, appears to be the westernmost end of the Ch'inling Shan, a range which we had come to know so well in the course of our journeys. After about three hours' march there is a slight rise to a pass, and then a precipitous drop for ten li to reach a village called Panchi Chuang, lying in a narrow valley. Another two hours' march down this valley brings one to the large walled village of Lich'uan, 60 li from Ch'enchiachi and 70 li from Min Chou. Here the stream flows south towards Szechuan and one is again on the southern side of the watershed.

From Lich'uan the track runs N.W. up a side valley ending in a grassy pass. For the next five li or so it keeps to the top of the mountain, whence there are truly magnificent views over the rocky snow-patched Min Shan to the south-west, and then descends steeply through a ravine to the valley of the T'ao River. Two tributary torrents are forded before the city of Min Chou is reached. Being now again in the valley of the T'ao we were once more on the northern side of the Yangtzu-Yellow River watershed. Since leaving Ch'in Chou a few days previously we had crossed this divide no less than six times, which is sufficient

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[1] [the hamlet of Tachuangtzu--ANALYST]

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to show the interesting nature of this mountain trail. A proper survey of this region would be sure to bring many interesting facts to light. Unfortunately the prospects of accurate map-making in China are not very bright at present. The Chinese, not unnaturally, have recently taken to objecting to the wandering foreigner who used to roam across the country making a map, and they profess to be compiling an accurate survey of the whole country themselves. The results of the work done in this connection in the north-east provinces has not been published, however, and at the present rate of progress it does not seem likely that the more remote parts in the west will be reached for generations. In the meantime existing maps of China are most unsatisfactory. Some of the coast provinces have been fairly thoroughly mapped by foreign military officers after 1900; there is also a very good British map of Szechuan, though where its authors have relied on the work of previous travellers, as in the case of the important Hsian-Chengtu road, it contains many errors. In the case of a remote province like Kansu, however, the best existing foreign maps are merely compilations of the route surveys of various foreign travellers, with the result that one gets an accurate representation of certain roads intersected by spaces which are practically blank, or filled in more or less at haphazard with names from old Chinese maps. In the case of Kansu many of these route surveys were compiled by Russian travellers long ago, more interested in Tibet and Mongolia than in China, so that one finds names like Mount Konkyr, Donkyr, Ugambu, etc. (to mention a few in the neighbourhood of Hsining) reappearing on the most modern maps; some of these names are nowadays quite untraceable amongst the Chinese; others are curious corruptions of well-known Chinese centres, like the two last mentioned, which represent Tanko and Weiyuan P'u respectively. Thus, although the interior of China is nowadays so well known, it is likely to remain for long one of the worst mapped parts of the world. For travelling purposes we found modern Chinese maps, compiled from the rough charts of the various districts (Hsien), though geographically very inaccurate, more useful than the foreign maps, as one could at any rate rely on the place-names.

487 It is suggested that the Chinese might with advantage borrow
the services of some officers from the Survey of India and
133 proceed to the triangulation of the whole country. The
results, at any rate in Kansu and parts of Shensi, would be
surprising. Amongst many other interesting facts which
would be brought to light are the actual heights of the snow-clad mountains on the western borders of Kansu and
Szechuan, some of which probably equal or surpass all but
the highest giants of the Himalayas.

361 Min Chou (now Min Hsien) is a small city with busy
suburbs situated on the right bank of the T'ao River at
438 the point where the latter, flowing down from the Kokonor
mountains in the west, makes a sharp right-angle turn to
the north. The altitude is about 7500 feet. The T'ao River
[241] valley, here nearly a mile wide in places, is very fertile,
and produces wheat, barley, beans, hemp, etc. Like T'ao
Chou and Hsiku, Min Chou is a centre for the Chinese
trade with the Tibetan inhabitants of the Kokonor country
493 further west. A rough cart built entirely of wood with
remarkably high wheels and drawn by the half-bred yak
is used round Min Chou, on the roads to T'ao Chou, on
the grasslands round the latter, and in other border parts of
the province. I mention this cart because it is obviously
very useful and because it is quite unusual to find wheeled
traffic of any kind in such mountainous country in China;
its introduction into the Tibetan inhabited plateau west of
Tachienlu in Szechuan would revolutionise transport in that
region.

487 Leaving Min Chou the road runs along the right bank
of the T'ao River for ten li, and then crosses to the left bank
[491] by a ferry, the bridge having been destroyed at the time
of the White Wolf raid. The river is here in the summer
133 about 80 yards wide, six to eight feet deep, and very rapid.
Navigation is confined to rafts of lumber down stream.
From the ferry the path continues up the valley for three
to four hours' march to the village of Hsitachai. The T'ao
River valley is in this neighbourhood one of the most
attractive regions in Kansu, or perhaps in China, being
fertile and well cultivated, and bounded on the southern
side by forest-clad mountains, the foothills of the great
Min Shan. The river flows much of the way in a narrow

trough below the surrounding level of the valley. Just 487
beyond Hsitachai the path leaves the T'ao River, along 133
which another track runs direct to Choni, and turns up a
side valley to the north to reach a semi-Tibetan hamlet
called Shanch'a, 80 li from Min Chou, where we passed the
night in the house of the headman. Pheasants were abundant
in this picturesque and well-wooded valley.

At Shanch'a the path turns up a side ravine leading after
an hour's march to an easy pass, whence there is a descent
for another hour into a bare valley, followed by a rise over
a second low pass, and a descent to New T'ao Chou in
another bare open valley, a march of 40 li in all. New T'ao 361
Chou (now called Lintan Hsien) is the official town, as
opposed to Old T'ao Chou, distant 60 li, the commercial
town, and is an empty shell of a city of no importance.
About half the few buildings inside the walls had been
destroyed by the White Wolf rebels the year previously.
We were accommodated in a temple which the magistrate
had fitted up temporarily as his yamen. The city lies in
a bare open valley some 20 li or so north of the T'ao
River in a region of treeless hills of loess, red clay, and red
sandstone. This somewhat dreary belt of bare red hills 563
intervenes practically all along this border between the loess
of Kansu proper and the pine forests and grass lands of
the Kokonor country, and corresponds roughly to a similar
Mahomedan wedge between Chinese and Tibetans. The
red hills round New T'ao Chou are cultivated and dotted
with villages, mostly Mahomedan. The Moslems extend
from here along the border to their real strongholds round
Ho Chou and Hsünhua, and thence north of the Yellow
River to beyond Hsining. We were travelling round the 132
two T'ao Chous during the season of summer thunderstorms
(early July), and usually experienced several daily, some very
severe and rather alarming in this elevated region. On one 788
occasion hurrying into a Mahomedan farmhouse for shelter 795
we found the inhabitants at prayer as though in a mosque;
this custom of using private houses for prayer is, I was told,
confined to the followers of the "New Sect," which is very
extended and influential in Kansu. Our sudden intrusion 563
was not resented in the least, and on this, as on every other 609
occasion when I met Mahomedans in Kansu, we were

563 treated with every courtesy. The Mahomedans of Kansu
609 still consider themselves to a certain extent as foreigners
sojourning in a strange land, and greet travellers from the
west as fellow-wanderers.

133 From New T'ao Chou to Choni, a march of 30 li, the
track runs south-west over a low pass in the red clay hills,
487 crosses a valley trending south, ascends another low pass,
and descends through a grassy ravine to the T'ao River.
563 Choni, the residence of a T'ussu, or native chief, ruling
several Tibetan tribes in the neighbourhood, is a picturesque
[361] little place, a walled village built round the chief's residence
[792] on the banks of the T'ao, and overlooked by a lamasery
containing some 500 monks. We were received by the
[576] usual cannon shots (an old-fashioned Chinese custom still
surviving in most parts of Kansu which is terrifying to
one's pony unless accustomed to it) and really sumptuously
lodged in the chief's residence. The Choni T'ussu is by
far the most important native chief in Kansu and exercises
jurisdiction over an extensive territory. Some of his tribes,
especially those living to the south of the Min Shan, are
turbulent and not easy to control. The chief is under the
authority of the Governor at Lanchou, but unlike his
colleagues in Szechuan west of Tachienlu, he retains his
power unimpaired over his Tibetans. On the east his
jurisdiction is bounded by Chinese territory; on the west
it fades away amongst the lawless nomads of the grasslands.
His authority, like that of most native chiefs in
China, extends rather over tribes and families than fixed
territory, and its limits are therefore vague.

563 The T'ao River is here the dividing line between
Tibetans and Chinese (Mahomedans), the forest-clad
mountains to the south being inhabited by the former, and
red hills to the north by the latter. There is good big game
shooting to be had in these forests, wapiti, sheep, goral,
serow, bear, etc. The elevation of the valley seems to be
487 about 8000 feet at Choni.

139 Leaving Choni the road runs up the beautiful T'ao valley
for about ten li, and then turns north-west up a small ravine
leading to an easy pass. From here it runs along the top of the
mountain for a few li, descends into a valley, crosses another
low pass, and drops down to Old T'ao Chou, 45 li from Choni.

Old T'ao Chou lies in a valley about ten li north of the 361
T'ao River at an elevation of about 9000 feet in the same
region of bare red hills with cultivated valleys as the New
City. At the time of our visit its chief feature was the fact
that the four walls enclosed nothing but a mass of ruins,
the town having been completely burnt out by the White
Wolf rebels the year before; we saw many a ruined city in
Kansu in the course of our travels—indeed in that province
ruins are the rule rather than the exception—but nothing
so utterly and completely destroyed as Old T'ao Chou.
Outside the city, however, there was a suburb which did
not seem to have suffered much, and here we were well
lodged in a large Tibetan inn. T'ao Chou is the Kansu 439
counterpart of Tachienlu and Sungp'an in Szechuan, a
centre for the exchange of the products of China and Tibet,
where barley meal, piece goods, tea, tobacco, and Chinese
wares such as saddlery, boots, guns, felt, etc., are exchanged
for wool, skins, furs, gold dust, medicines, deer's horns,
Tibetan incense, and other produce of the highlands, a
lucrative trade here largely in the hands of the Mahomedans.
There are, however, certain marked differences in the
conditions ruling at T'ao Chou and Tachienlu. For instance
in the latter place trade during recent years has been
greatly interfered with by the hostilities which have been
carried on intermittently between Chinese and Tibetans
during the past few years, whereas at T'ao Chou the traffic
has been uninterrupted; secondly at Tachienlu the lamas
and native tribesmen have been completely cowed by the
Chinese and are not allowed to carry arms, whereas at T'ao [563]
Chou the wild-looking nomads swagger about the streets
armed to the teeth, and have so far only been bested by the
Chinese in commercial transactions.

A road leads from T'ao Chou through the grass country 487
of the independent Golok to Jyekundo and Central Tibet.
Though this route is little known, it is said to pass through 133
good grass country most of the way, and is perhaps the
easiest road from China into Tibet. Another road leads
south to Sungp'an in Szechuan, passing over the Min Shan
by a peculiar looking square gap in this rocky barrier range,
called the "Shih Men" (Stone Gate), but it is little used
traverses the territory of one of the most lawless tribes

487 under the Choni chief. From the neighbourhood of T'ao Chou fine views are obtainable over this great Min Shan
133 range, rising like a gigantic wall of snow-patched rock immediately to the south of the river, its serrated peaks being, I should say, 16,000 to 17,000 feet in height. It here forms the divide between the Yangtzu and the Yellow River, and from it the Ch'inling Shan continues eastwards right across China to the plains of Honan, separating the rice-eating peoples of Central China from the wheat-eating inhabitants of the north. Should such a catastrophe ever occur as a temporary separation of Northern from Southern China, this great barrier range would form an ideal political boundary between the two States.

797 There is a station of an American mission at T'ao Chou (as also at Min Chou, Choni, and Titao) designed for work amongst the Tibetans of the Kokonor border. But as has been the case with missionary work on the Szechuan Tibet frontier, their efforts to influence the Tibetan tribesmen have been practically without result owing to the immense power of the lama church and its monasteries. This mysterious Sino-Tibetan borderland and the prospect of attacking lamaism in its native strongholds have attracted some of the finest missionaries in the East, who, however, find after years of strenuous work and self-denial, that they have only succeeded in influencing a few of the Chinese. In Tibetan Yunnan the Catholics, and on the Indo-Tibetan frontier the Moravians, have been working for the past 50 years or so, I believe with the same lack of success as far as the Tibetans are concerned; and in the case of the China Inland Mission, which worked for years amongst the Tibetans of the Szechuan marches, the only converts obtained were amongst the Chinese settlers of that region. Viewed from a missionary point of view, it therefore seems a doubtful policy to waste so much money and energy in attempting the impossible on the sparsely populated Tibetan borderland, when there are still many great centres, at any rate in the north-west, of the more receptive and friendly Chinese untouched.

164 The year after our visit there was an outbreak of pneumonic plague round T'ao Chou, which appears to have originated in the same kind of grass country inhabited by nomads and marmots as the Manchurian outbreak of 1911.

It seems to have been checked by the energetic action of 164 the Chinese authorities acting under the advice of a British missionary doctor from Lanchou. The terrible thing about pneumonic plague in North China is that a patient once afflicted seems bound to die, which accounts for the amount of attention it attracts. But the ravages even of such an outbreak as the Manchurian one of 1911 seem small when compared with those of bubonic plague in India. The outbreak of 1911 caused a panic in North China amongst Chinese and foreigners alike, and the Legation Quarter in Peking barricaded itself behind its defences as though to repel another Boxer rising, though only a case or two occurred in the city; one does not hear of similar measures being taken in India.

From Lanchou Fu to Old T'ao Chou by the route we 487 followed is a distance of about 1450 li and occupied some 24 day's travel.

Leaving T'ao Chou the trail runs north-west over a low 487
pass in the red clay hills, traverses a cultivated valley
trending south, and ascends by easy gradients to another 133
pass, whence there is a particularly fine view over the Min
Shan to the south of the T'ao River. Beyond this point
Chinese cease to be seen. From this pass the track descends
steeply to another stream flowing south and then continues
north-west up a flat shallow valley bounded by bare grassy
hills. In this valley and its neighbourhood there are several [364]
Tibetan villages, in one of which, about 50 li from T'ao
Chou, we passed the night; its name has escaped me, if I
ever heard it. These villages are under the control of the
Choni chief, and preparations had been made to receive us
in the headman's house. The Tibetans are usually considered
to live under the hardest and most filthy conditions, which
is certainly so in the case of these Amdowa where they are
nomads on the grass-lands. But the houses of the headmen 342
of the agricultural Tibetan villages, both here and elsewhere
where we rested in them, showed an astonishingly high
standard of comfort and were superior to any Chinese house
I have seen. These houses are solidly built of wood and
stone of two stories, and the rooms of the one in which
we were lodged here were spotlessly clean and panelled
with stained wood.

An hour's march beyond this village the trail emerged 487
from the valley after topping an easy pass, where marmots 133
were very abundant, sitting up in front of their holes and
dodging in as one approached them. This pass is here the
boundary of the real grass-lands, and apparently the border
of the Choni chief's territory in this direction. Beyond it 233
all cultivation ceases, there are no more houses, and one
enters a region of shallow valleys and low mountains
(elevation about 11,000 feet) dotted with large herds of yak,
sheep, and ponies grazing round the black rectangular tents
of the Tibetan nomads, here, as elsewhere, called Drokba.
These grassy steppes, always referred to by the Chinese 133
as *Ts'ao Ti*, bound China everywhere on the north and 563
west, and always one ascends to them through a region of
broken mountains, whether it be from Szechuan or Kansu
up to the highlands of the Tibetan plateau, or from Chihli
or Shansi up to the highlands of Mongolia; and always it

133 is the same land of nomads and lamas, whether Tibetan
563 or Mongol. In past centuries the Chinese were ever engaged, with varying success, in defending their fertile plains and valleys against the incursions of Tartar hordes from these tablelands; now the nomads are impotent outside their own territories, reduced in numbers and virility perhaps by the lama religion, and these vast empty spaces serve as buffers protecting China from the rest of Asia. Undoubtedly her wisest policy is to leave the scattered inhabitants to manage their own affairs as hitherto under her vague suzerainty.

133 The trail runs north-west across these grass-lands,
• 487 passing continually from one shallow valley to another; at first these valleys slope S.E. towards the T'ao River, but after 20 li or so they slope N.W. towards the Ho Chou
[361] River. The pasturage is excellent and there are many nomad encampments; the latter are only to be approached with care, as they are guarded by huge Tibetan mastiffs, I should think easily the most formidable breed of dog in the world, and the nomads themselves are not friendly to strangers. Indeed the Amdo Tibetan of the Kokonor grass country is about the last kind of individual one would choose to meet alone on a dark night, and a wilder or more picturesque looking lot of ruffians it would be difficult to imagine. They always go heavily armed, and are robbers by nature. Once properly introduced to them, however, one can count on friendly treatment, and we had nothing to complain of in this respect. After six or seven hour's march from the
792 village where we had passed the night the trail descended from the plateau into an open and partly cultivated valley with the temples and barrack-like buildings of the monastery of Heitso Ssu at the end of it, a most striking sight in this land of tent-living nomads.

Heitso Ssu (the Chinese name) is a large and wealthy monastery, containing, we were told, some thousand lamas. It is quite a little town in itself, with, as is usually the case on this border, a small Chinese village or bazaar of one street, run mostly by Mahomedans, attached to it. It lies at the junction of two small valleys below the level of the
[241] grass country, and the neighbouring slopes are well cultivated with barley and peas and dotted with Tibetan farms. We
609 were badly housed in a kind of inn in the Chinese bazaar,

513 European scholars have maintained that the Hsifan are not
Tibetans and suggested that they represent a northern
branch of one of the non-Chinese races of S.W. China, like
[197] the Lolos or Mosos. Granting that there is no such thing
as a homogeneous Tibetan race, the Hsifan of the country
west of T'ao Chou speak the Tibetan language and are as
much Tibetans as the inhabitants of any other portion of the
Tibetan plateau. A little further north they come into
contact with the Kokonor Mongols, whom they bully and
plunder. Unlike the Mongols, who are everywhere being
pushed back by the encroaching Chinese agriculturist along
the northern borders of Shansi and Chihli, the Tibetans of
the Kansu border hold their own against the Chinese
colonist; partly perhaps because the country is too elevated
to suit the latter, but also because the N. Eastern Tibetan is
truculent and independent compared to the Mongol and
272 further takes readily and successfully to agriculture. Their
food is the buttered tea and tsamba (parched barley meal)
262 of the Tibetans everywhere. Tsamba is a palatable food
for people fond of porridge, and the buttered tea is not at all
bad when regarded as gruel or soup instead of tea; it is for
this reason that the bitter teas of India are unsuited to the
Tibetans. It is often said that the Chinese sell the merest
refuse of their tea bushes to the Tibetans; but it happens
to be what the latter want to make their gruel with. There
is little or no resemblance between the tea drunk by the
Tibetans and that consumed in Europe.

142 There appear to be two racial types in Tibet, the short
round-faced Mongoloid type, and the tall prominent-
featured Aryan type; the latter is common among the
Tibetans of Amdo as amongst those of Kham. A peculiar
516 feature of the eastern Tibetan, by which he could in nine
cases out of ten be recognised in Chinese or foreign dress,
is his habit of standing with his feet turned out at right
angles to his body.

487 From Heitso Ssu the trail runs north over low grass-
133 covered hills for a few li and then descends through a rocky
gorge to a small monastery called K'achia Ssu (all our names
[792] are Chinese) lying in a narrow wooded valley trending N.W.
In this neighbourhood there grows a plant poisonous to
[137] ponies and mules. From here the track runs down the

valley, at first through cultivated fields and then through a 487
densely wooded gorge. This is a difficult march in the 133
summer, as the trail constantly crosses and recrosses the
stream, which is rapid, obstructed by boulders, and only
just fordable. Several of us got a wetting, but we were lucky
in keeping the pack-mules on their feet and our bedding
dry. The mountains in the neighbourhood are covered with
fine forest, but mostly on the slopes facing north only, a
peculiarity which may be noticed all along the Kokonor
border; I have observed the same thing in the forests of
Northern Shansi; whether it is that the sun is too hot on
the southern slopes, or that the northern slopes alone receive
sufficient moisture, I am unable to say. Four to five hours' [792]
march down this gorge, past several small lamaseries, brings
one to the junction of this stream with the Tahsia River, a
torrent flowing from Labrang to Ho Chou. The Labrang
road turns up this valley and runs for a few li through
cultivated fields to the small monastery of Shakou Ssu, [792]
which lies on the north side of the stream, with a Mahomedan
hamlet, Sasuma, opposite, where we passed the night in an
inn. There are pine forests all around, and the Tahsia River, [137]
though only a mountain torrent, is used for rafting the cut
timber down to the Yellow River and Lanchou. The timber [313]
is made up into narrow sections, fastened one behind the
other, and the jointed raft which results is navigated down
the rapids and through the rocks with extraordinary skill by
Mahomedan raftmen.

From Heitso to Labrang is a distance of some 120 li,
and Sasuma lies about half way, the track running for the
rest of the way up the valley of the Tahsia River. For the [491]
first 30 li the path is very bad and rocky, the valley being a
gorge hemmed in by wooded mountains; there is no more
fording to be done, however, as the river is spanned by good
cantilever bridges, this being a portion of the Labrang-Ho
Chou road, which is much used by the mule trains of
Mahomedan merchants. In this neighbourhood we saw [136]
some *ma chi*, the large and handsome silver pheasant
with red legs (*Crossoptilon auritum*, probably). For the
second 30 li the valley opens out and the road becomes a
good highway. The first intimation we received of the 361
approach to Labrang were the white and blue tents dotted

792 574 We were well accommodated by the Mahomedans in their village. The Hutukotu was away "saying prayers in the grass-country" (*Ts'ao Ti Nien Ching*—as we were told), but the second lama in charge, an aged monk of refined and intelligent appearance, received us most amicably in a gorgeous apartment glittering with gold images and other signs of wealth, and gave instructions for us to be shown round the monastery. I am not sufficiently acquainted with Lamaism to be able to give an intelligent description of what we saw, but the temples were the finest and richest I have visited in China, and the residences of the monks the usual gloomy buildings common to all lamaseries. At our interview with the lama we were presented with the usual silk scarves (*Khata*), and it may be noted that the Chinese and Tibetans with us attached these in a prominent manner to their persons to show all and sundry that they had been received by the authorities of the monastery; I do not know whether this is a usual use to which to put the *Khata*, but it seemed a good idea here. After getting back to our quarters we found a present consisting of half a sheep for ourselves and several bushels of peas for our animals from the lama, which was very welcome in a country of scanty supplies.

487 133 From Labrang to Ho Chou is a distance of about 200 li, which is usually made in three stages. The first day's march took us back down the valley of the Tahsia River to Sasuma. From here the trail continues down the valley, which is here cultivated, past several small lamaseries, for 40 li to the village of Ch'aokou. Here gorges are entered through which the river winds for another 20 li to the village of Ch'ingshui (these villages are Chinese, or rather Mahomedan, with nothing Tibetan about them). The path ledged in the rock and supported by wooden stagings high above the torrent is very dangerous in places. There is an idea that mules and ponies accustomed to the mountains never fall, but this is by no means the case, and I have on more than one occasion seen an animal plunge to his death over the edge of one of these precipices, though fortunately we never lost one ourselves; it is always wise to dismount in such places. In spite of the dangerous nature of the road we met large numbers of mule caravans going up to Labrang 484

484 with the goods of the Mahomedan merchants of Ho
Chou.

We passed the night at Ch'ingshui, where we met a
202 military officer sent up to escort us down into China Proper
who calmly informed us with little apparent interest that
China and Japan were at war. This news afterwards turned
out to be a local echo of the crisis existing between the two
countries two months previously, and the incident shows
that even today momentous events on the coast have
comparatively little interest for the inhabitants of the far
133 interior. Below Ch'ingshui the path continues through
winding gorges with the foaming torrent hemmed in by
487 forest-clad mountains for 20 li to the likin barrier of T'ung-
men Kuan, where the gorges debouch on to an open cultivated
valley. This is one of the numerous "Gates" leading into
and out of China Proper on her western and northern
frontiers. There is a bit of an old wall to be seen, perhaps
a portion of the Kokonor loop of the Great Wall. From
here to Ho Chou, a distance of 60 li, a good highway runs
down the fertile valley past numerous Mahomedan villages.
We did not see the valley at its best, because it poured with
rain during the whole march, and the clay soil was turned
into a slippery morass; at one place, crossing a nullah by
a narrow causeway, one of our mule litters containing a
cook was overturned into the ditch, and remained literally
upside down with the eight legs of the two mules pointing
skywards for some time, till they were hauled out in that
position, no damage being done.

361 Ho Chou (new name T'aoho Hsien) is a pleasant little
city lying in a most delightful valley plain, from five to six
634 thousand feet above the sea, sheltered by high mountains,
and as fertile as a garden. The mountains to the west and
south-west (T'aitzu Shan) are very bold and rocky, and
carried a good deal of snow at the time of our visit (middle
of July). Ho Chou itself consists of a small Chinese town
with large and busy Mahomedan suburbs, containing many
fine mosques and seminaries. It is the centre of Mahomedan
power and influence in the province, and General Ma Anliang,
who actually lives a day's journey or so away near the
634 Yellow River, has a fine residence in the suburb. The
Chinese magistrate in the city seems to have little to do
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OGG meaningless jargon of transliterated Chinese characters, does more harm than good to the cause of Christianity. A translation of the Old Testament, distributed, in accordance with the declared policy of the Bible Societies, without notes or comment, cannot but compare unfavourably with the austerely pure classics of Confucius. In striking contrast to the work of the Bible Societies is that carried on by the Christian Literature Society in its dissemination of wholesome modern literature.

● 487 From Ho Chou to Lanchou Fu is a three days' journey
called 210 li. The road runs in a north-westerly direction
[491] across the fertile valley to reach the Tahsia River, which is
crossed by a well-built wooden bridge. From here it ascends
133 steeply over hills of loess and red clay for a few hundred
feet, and then runs along a ridge between two deep narrow valleys for 35 li to the village of Sonanpa. The divide between the T'ao and Tahsia rivers is crossed just before reaching Sonanpa, a village with inns perched up on the top of the ridge, where we passed the night.

On the following day's march the road continues along an undulating ridge, gradually descending, for four hours' march to the village of Tawant'ou, lying on the edge of the loess mountains overlooking the T'ao River valley, into
which the road drops by a long and very steep descent to
[361] reach the township of T'angwanch'uan. This place is about
half-way between Ho Chou and Lanchou Fu and is the
[312] largest centre passed on the way. The T'ao valley in the
neighbourhood is irrigated and fertile, but the surrounding hills are bare of all vegetation, and the country is absolute desert where irrigation ceases. The geological formation of the hills, loess superimposed on red sandstone weathered into pinnacles and pillars of all kinds of shapes and designs, presents a most curious sight. In the valley the noonday heat of the midsummer sun reflected off the desert rocks was terrific. The T'ao River, here about 80 yards wide, deep and rapid, is crossed by a ferry, and the road continues north-east through desolate sandy hills to Manp'ing, a miserable village, the end of the stage and 80 li from Lanchou. This place is in the district of Shani, which is mostly desert.

From Manp'ing the road ascends through a desolate rocky gorge and then by steep zigzags to reach the pass over the divide between the T'ao and Yellow Rivers, on the further side of which there is a complete change of scenery, green hills and fertile terraces taking the place of the desert mountain sides. From the pass the trail descends into a ravine, climbs over a mountain spur, and drops steeply to the village of Chiangchia Wan, whence it descends gradually for three hours' march through the loess to reach Lanchou and the valley of the Yellow River. Our tour of South Western Kansu had occupied us about five weeks, during which period we had covered some six to seven hundred miles.

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CHAPTER XI

FROM LANCHOU FU NORTH TO CHENFAN IN THE ALASHAN DESERT, AND THENCE WEST TO ÊPO ON THE KOKONOR BORDER

Through the desert hills to P'ingfan—The Wushao Ling—Kulang—How to raise a mule—Liangchou—Opium suppression—Chenfan—Trails from Mongolia to the Kokonor—Crossing a corner of the Alashan desert—Yungch'ang—The Pien Tu K'ou passage—Êpo—Wool, deer horns, and musk.

480 133 WE left Lanchou on the 17th of July bound for Chenfan, an oasis in the Alashan desert lying ten to eleven days' journey almost due north. For the first week, as far as Liangchou Fu, we followed the Great West Road leading to Turkestan, most of the way a good cart track with accommodation and supplies every 40 to 50 li. From Liangchou to Chenfan the road ran through a string of little oases in the desert.

Leaving Lanchou by the iron bridge the road runs for 30 li westwards up the Yellow River valley, which here opens out into a small cultivated plain, and then turns north up a narrow gorge in the hills for ten li to reach Chuchia Yingtzu, a small village in a desolate region of bare stony hills. From here the track continues to ascend gradually through barren hills of sandy loess, crosses a small pass, and descends to the miserable hamlet of Yuchia Wan, the end of the first stage of 70 li. The surrounding country is nearly desert and the water brackish. From Yuchia Wan the track undulates north-westwards through a maze of bare loess hills, treeless and waterless, for 45 li to the village of Hsienshui Ho, where, as the name implies, a brackish streamlet enables some poor crops to be grown. In Kansu the Yellow River is roughly speaking the boundary between China and the wastes of Central Asia, all the country north-west of it being desert where there is no irrigation. The road continues for another two to three hours' march through these barren hills until it suddenly emerges on to the fertile valley of

[P. 154]

the P'ingfan River a few li south of Hung Ch'engtzu, a small 487
walled town and the end of the second stage from Lanchou. 133

From Hung Ch'engtzu to the district city of P'ingfan is a pleasant march of 70 li up the fertile valley, past several villages, including the township of Nan Tatung about halfway. A mile before getting in the old Manchu garrison 712
town of Chuang-lang T'ing is passed, imposing in appearance with its well-built walls, but nowadays an empty shell. The remnants of these old Manchu garrisons in Western Kansu are now, as elsewhere, in extreme poverty. But their existence 563
at any rate gives the province the distinction of being, so far as I know, the only one of the eighteen provinces which contains a resident population of the five races, symbolised by the new five coloured national flag, which go to make up the Republic, Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, and Mahomedans. The Union of Races represented by this flag has hardly become a reality yet; and is perhaps not likely to materialise until the Chinese cease fighting the Tibetans and grant them autonomy as a self-governing dominion of the Chinese commonwealth on the lines of the relationship between Canada or Australia and the rest of the British Empire. P'ingfan is a prosperous little place, the centre of a [361]
rich irrigated valley, and is of some importance as the junction of roads to Lanchou, Hsining, Liangchou, and Ninghsia, the four largest towns of Western Kansu.

From P'ingfan the road continues up the valley with ~~487~~
the ruins of the Great Wall on the right hand, the scenery ~~133~~
becoming wilder and cultivation and habitations less as one proceeds. Thirty li out the mountains close in on the valley to form a gorge, and shortly afterwards the river is forded to [491]
reach the village and former posting stage of Wusheng Yi, 40 li from P'ingfan. Beyond this place the valley becomes flat and open and assumes a plateau-like character, with patches of cultivation here and there. Another 40 li brings one to the village and ruined fort of Ch'ak'ou Yi, the end of a stage of 80 li. General desolation and ruins are the features of this part of Kansu, intensified to us perhaps by the fact that we rode during the afternoon through a succession of bitterly cold hailstorms, the elevation being close on 9000 feet. The remains of the Great Wall, the ruins of farms, villages, and forts, the abandoned fields in the marshy valley,

487 and the background of bare snow-sprinkled mountains, made up a wild and desolate landscape, the scene of uncounted con- 133 tests between Chinese, Tartars, and Mahomedans in the past.

The trail continues up the valley, which is here a mile or two wide and slopes gently up to grassy downs on either side, for four to five hours' march to an old military post [491] called Chench'iang Yi. Here the river is crossed by a ford, which must be difficult in rainy weather, and the road, leaving the P'ingfan valley, runs due north over easy grassy slopes for 15 li to gain the Wushao Ling (10,000 feet), the divide between the waters which flow east to join the Yellow River and those which flow north into the desert and fail to reach the sea. Immediately to the west some rocky peaks patched with snow rise to a height of 14,000 to 15,000 feet. [136] From the pass the road descends, at first over grassy downs alive with marmots, and then by a steep stony track, to the ruined village of Anyuan P'u in the narrow valley of the Kulang River. The Wushao Ling will prove the principal engineering obstacle to the railway which is projected as an extension of the Lung Hai line along the main road towards Central Asia, and will presumably necessitate a considerable tunnel. Otherwise the construction of this extension will be easy compared to the section from Hsian to Lanchou. Fifteen li down the valley brings one to the village of Lungk'ou P'u. This is a long day's march called 90 li (which means 30 miles in Western Kansu) and the track beyond the pass is bad and rocky.

On the following day a short march of 45 li by a rough road down the valley brought us to the district city of Kulang, a small town three-parts in ruins situated at the point where the stream debouches from the mountains on to the plain. Here we were given a typical instance of Chinese administrative methods. One of our mules having fallen lame, we asked the magistrate to be good enough to procure us another animal, which he said could easily be done. We were accommodated in a small yamen and our mules in an inn, and that evening the head muleteer came round in a great state and said that one of our mules had been seized by the underlings from the magistrate's yamen. Explanations were of course immediately forthcoming and the misunderstanding cleared up. The magistrate had instructed his

underlings that a mule must be found, and the latter had 487
gone round to the inn as the most likely place to find a
suitable animal, and had simply walked off with the best 133
one they could lay hands on.

At Kulang one is 120 li, two short marches, from
Liangchou. The road runs at first across a loess plain
dotted with fortified farms past the village of Shuangt'a to
the old posting station of Chingpien Yi, a short stage of 50
li. The villages and post stations on this side of the divide 361
are even more dilapidated than those further east, and are
mostly nothing but a heap of ruins round an inn or two.
The people here seem to have given up living in villages, so
prominent a feature of Chinese life in most provinces, and
occupy the fortress farms with which the plains are dotted.
From Chingpien Yi to Liangchou the road continues across 487
the level plain which is in places almost entirely covered
with loose stones, rendering the going very slow and tiring. 133
On the left hand the view is bounded by the snow-capped
Nan Shan; on the right the plain extends to the horizon. The
twin pagodas of Liangchou form a prominent landmark
denoting the approach to the city.

Liangchou Fu, now known as Wuwei Hsien, is about the
most important city, commercially and politically, in Western
Kansu. It lies in an irrigated plain dotted with fertile oases [5/12]
between the Nan Shan mountains and the desert of Alashan.
This plain is traversed by numerous streams and irrigation
channels flowing down from the snows of the mountains
to lose themselves eventually in the sands of the desert, and
owing to this never failing supply of water for irrigation
purposes is a very fertile and productive region. The
inhabitants of Liangchou and the surrounding plains are
mostly Chinese; the whole region was devastated during the
big rebellion, and was again laid waste by marauding bands
of Mahomedans from the Hsining neighbourhood during
the rebellion of 1895. The interior of the city is very poor- 361
looking and dilapidated, like most Kansu towns, and the
streets are almost entirely covered with the same loose
stones found outside; riding being the only method of
getting about, these stones are a great drawback to the place.
There is a station of the China Inland Mission at Liangchou 797
which can compete with those at Hsining and Ninghsia for

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to cultivation, has of course had a great effect on the good results obtained. It now remains to be seen whether suppression can be maintained after the withdrawal of this foreign stimulus. In the eastern provinces where the upper and middle classes are more or less in contact with the West a strong native public opinion now exists against opium; the same cannot be said of the backward North West; and it is there that the authorities will have to watch for recrudescence of cultivation. As regards the suppression of smoking and consumption generally, the same success has by no means been attained, and in out of the way parts it appears to be indulged in much as formerly. In view of the increasing scarcity of the drug, however, and the rising price, this cannot really be the case, and if suppression of cultivation is strictly adhered to, the existing stocks will gradually be exhausted, and the rising generation will grow up without contracting the opium habit.

We rested at Liangchou for a day, being entertained by 153
the officials, and then left for Chenfan, distant three marches.
The first stage was 65 li to a group of farms called Chungchia 487
Ta Men lying on the edge of the desert. For the first three hours the road, a good cart-track, lies through rich irrigated country, and for the rest of the way belts of sandy desert alternate with irrigated fields. The water, where it is not [271]
obtainable from irrigation channels, is very brackish. From Chungchia Ta Men the road continues north across a sandy plain between the desert on the right hand and cultivated lands on the left. Farms with wells are passed 20 and 40 li [312]
out. Hsiangchia Wan, the end of another stage of 65 li, is a thickly populated oasis on the edge of the desert, lying [361]
just east of a range of barren hills which form a prominent landmark from afar. The snow mountains behind Liangchou now fade out of sight. From here to Chenfan Hsien is a distance of 70 li. The trail still runs north over a sandy plain covered with scrub and rough grass with a river on the left hand, the latter formed by the junction of various streams and irrigation channels, and flowing north to water the Chenfan oasis and beyond to lose itself in the sands of the desert. Branches of this stream have to be forded at [491]
various points; though quite shallow, they contain dangerous quicksands and should be approached with care. Thirty-five

133 li out cultivation and houses are reached at Kaochia Ta Men,
•487 the beginning of the large Chenfan oasis, and for the rest
of the stage the road runs through rich irrigated lands with
occasional excursions into sand dunes.

361 Chenfan Hsien is a prosperous little district city in a
highly fertile oasis. Immediately round the town is a belt
312 of rich cultivation, and patches of irrigated land occur in the
243 desert for 200 li to the north. There are no villages in these
oases, the people living entirely in walled farms. Wheat is
the main crop raised, and the abundant water supply from
the snow-fed streams for irrigation purposes, combined with
[132] an almost rainless climate, appears to assure good crops
with machine-like regularity. Chenfan compares favourably
361 with most towns in Kansu, the streets are clean and well
634 kept, there is a noticeable absence of ruins, and the shops
display a surprising variety of goods. At the time of our
visit the district enjoyed the services of one of the best
territorial officials we met throughout the North West, a
young man who really appeared to have the interests of the
people at heart, and to devote himself as far as lay in his
power to improve their lot. He remarked that the post,
though so isolated, was pleasant enough in the summer, but
that in the winter the north winds from the Alashan desert
were terrible, much worse than the severest winter sandstorms
ever experienced at Peking. The inhabitants of the
surrounding oases seem entirely cut off from the rest of
487 China, and form little self-supporting communities. Chenfan
itself, however, is, strange to say, in direct communication
133 with Tientsin and the coast by means of a much frequented
camel route from Kueihua Ch'eng to Liangchou across the
Mongolian grass country and the Alashan desert. This road,
which debouches from the desert at Chenfan, enables the
Mahomedans of the Ho Chou and Hsining neighbourhood
to communicate with the coast without passing through
Chinese Kansu at all.

From Chenfan we had to proceed to Hsining, the frontier town on the high road to the Kokonor and Tibet. Enquiries showed that we had the choice of two roads, to the north or south of the snow mountains behind Liangchou respectively. As the latter would have meant retracing our steps to Kulang, we decided to follow the former, which entailed going due

west until we had got behind the Liangchou mountains, 487
and then dropping south to Hsining along the Kokonor
border. There is a shorter trail south-west from Liangchou, 133
passing apparently more or less directly over the snow-range, but we were told that it was very difficult, seldom used, and probably impassable for loaded mules. There are only a limited number of trails leading up from the plains of Mongolia through the Nan Shan to the Kokonor plateau, and the route we followed, though little known to foreigners, is probably one of the most important of these tracks. It reaches the plateau by means of a famous gorge known as the Pien Tu K'ou (meaning Passage across the Frontier), and the section of our route from Chenfan, in the Alashan desert, to Êpo, in the Kokonor, is probably a portion of an important trail connecting Urga with Lassa, placing these two capitals of Lamaism in communication without the necessity of passing through settled Chinese territory. Our first few days' march lay across a portion of the Alashan desert to regain the Great West Road at Yungch'ang, a very trying experience, since the season of the year was the end of July, when nobody travels in the desert if he can possibly avoid it.

The first stage on this road being a very long one of 100 li across the desert, the magistrate had kindly arranged for us to break it into two by sending on tents to some wells 30 li out. Leaving Chenfan the road runs south through the oasis for 15 li, crosses the main branch of the Chenfan River by a ford, and then turns west into the desert. Two hours' march further on we reached the wells of Sha Ching, where we found a luxurious camp established for us by the forethought of the magistrate. The water from the wells is evil-looking and very brackish, but we had arranged to
bring sweet water with us. The contrast between these rich 634
oases, such as Chenfan, and the absolutely lifeless desert, 651
lying side by side so that one passes in one stride from the one to the other, is most striking. The great wealth of the irrigated land is evidenced by the fact that the district of Chenfan, though containing so much desert, offers a highly lucrative post to its magistrate; that is to say the land-tax receipts, consisting of grain, are large; the grain collected in this fashion by the magistrate is remitted by him to the

634 provincial treasury in silver at an old-established rate much 651 below the market price, permitting a considerable profit to be made on the transaction. The productiveness of the land is of course entirely dependent on the irrigation streams from the snows of the Nan Shan, the magistrate informing us that he had been nine months at his post and only seen rain fall on two occasions.

•487 The following day's march of 70 li to the oasis of Shehsia Kou would have been easy enough had we not lost our way. 133 We started at 3 a.m. in order to try and reach the wells of T'ou Ching, 40 li out, before the sun got too hot. The trail led across a waste of sand hills and soon ceased to exist. The desert is devoid of all vegetation and lifeless except for [134] antelope, which were constantly in view; what they find to eat I cannot imagine. After we had been marching for some hours the soldier from Chenfan who was acting as guide announced that he had lost the way. Looking for the wells where we were to have our midday halt was like searching for a needle in a haystack, and the position was unpleasant enough. Altogether we wandered round, steering more or less west, for some seven or eight hours, suffering greatly from thirst, with the sand often over the ponies fetlocks. Our only landmark was an ancient ruined tower, the remains of some old fortification in this region, perhaps a part of the Great Wall. At last one of the soldiers sent out to reconnoitre from a rise descried the tents pitched at the wells in pretty well the opposite direction to that in which we were then trekking, and an hour later men and animals were satisfying their thirst. Another three hours' march across the desert brought us to the oasis of Shehsia Kou, where we were comfortably lodged in the interior of one of the fortified farms so common in this region.

The next stage is another desert march of 80 li to the village of Ningyuan P'u, but there is an oasis, Tung Wan, half-way, the going is better, and we took care not to lose [361] our way. Ningyuan P'u is a walled village at the mouth of an irrigated gorge where the mountains meet the desert plain. From here to Yungch'ang is a distance of 75 li. The trail follows up the irrigated valley for 35 li to the hamlet of Tsungchia Chai, where it turns up a barren stony ravine, crosses a low pass, and descends across an arid sloping plain to Yungch'ang Hsien, a small district city on the mainroad.

Leaving Yungch'ang the trail runs west up a cultivated valley for 25 li to the ruined village of Shuimo Kuan. Here the stream is forded, and the trail, leaving the high road to Kanchou and Suchou on the right hand, continues up the valley due west, ascending very gradually, for 50 li to Kaoku Ch'eng, an old walled military post surrounded by a ruined village, where we passed the night in the dilapidated yamen of the *Yu Chi*, or Major in the old army of the Green Standard, who still survived in this remote corner of the Republic, though about eight years out of date. Kaoku Ch'eng lies in a broad shallow valley sloping up to the mountains on either side, with very little cultivation. Ruined farms and abandoned fields are numerous, and signs of former prosperity and present depopulation are not wanting. A huge snow mountain is visible lying ten to twenty miles away to the south, apparently part of the snow range behind Liangchou.

Beyond Kaoku Ch'eng the flat valley merges imperceptibly into a rolling grassy plain, bounded north and south by mountains, and uninhabited save for flocks of sheep and occasional antelope. The road undulates due west across this plain, running more or less parallel to the main range of the Nan Shan, a high rocky barrier bounding the Kokonor plateau. For the last ten li there is a descent through cultivated fields to Tama Ying, another old walled military post mostly in ruins, lying on the head-waters of a stream flowing N.W. towards Shantan Hsien. There are several farms of settlers in the neighbourhood, and the barley looked well, though still green in early August (elevation between 8000 and 9000 feet). On this day's march we noticed the ruins of some of the old beacon towers common to the high roads of Kansu, and these ruins, with those of the old military posts, show that this was once an important military road. At Tama Ying we were again quartered in the yamen of the *Yu Chi*, the latter an aged veteran of the Mahomedan campaigns, who was spending the evening of his no doubt active and adventurous life in this remote spot, with only the vaguest ideas of the momentous changes which had come to pass with the disappearance of the Manchu dynasty.

487 From Tama Ying the trail runs south-west across rolling grassy downs, on which cattle and sheep are pastured, 133 gradually approaching the main range of the Nan Shan on the left front. We saw large numbers of antelope on this march and in places the pasturage was extraordinarily luxuriant and the grass up to the ponies' knees. The stage is a short one of only some 50 li and for the last hour the trail runs through fields of barley to reach Maying Tung, another of the old walled forts with which this region is dotted, surrounded by farms and patches of cultivation. It lies close under the Nan Shan, whose rocky peaks rise above the snow-line, and a few li from the mouth of the gorge leading up to the Kokonor plateau. This is the well-known passage through the Nan Shan called the Pien Tu K'ou, and is a remarkable cleft in the huge wall of rock presented by the main range, from which there issues a torrent flowing north towards Kanchou.

From Maying Tung to Êpo on the Kokonor plateau is a long march, called 100 li, which took us over twelve hours. The trail runs across the plain for an hour or two to reach the foot of the mountains and then enters the Pien Tu K'ou, a narrow gorge hemmed in by precipitous mountains. The trail up the gorge is very bad, and is made more difficult by its constantly crossing and recrossing the torrent, which descends in a succession of cascades and, in the summer, is only just fordable. We were told that camels negotiate this road in the winter, when it is probably much easier. Every time we forded the stream I expected our mules to come to grief, the donkeys, which accompanied us in the capacity of grain carriers for the mules, being in places nearly submerged. At length the inevitable happened, and one of the mule litters turned turtle in mid-stream owing to the mules being swept off their feet by the current; all the contents were washed down stream and the occupant, one of the servants, nearly drowned. This incident, and the subsequent collection of as much flotsam and jetsam as we could recover down stream, delayed us for an hour or so. The gorge is uninhabited except for two likin huts which seem to have gone out of business. After some five hours' march the 233 going improves and the precipitous mountains give way to grassy slopes dotted with herds of yak and flocks of sheep

and the black rectangular tents of nomad Tibetans, the usual 233
hinterland of *Ts'ao Ti* (Grass Lands), which everywhere in
the north and west lie behind the border ranges of China.
Apart from the nomads and their ponies, yak, and cattle,
the only sign of life were the huge vultures, which were [136]
extraordinarily abundant. The final ascent to the pass is by
easy gradients, and a similar descent of about 10 li brings 487 ●
one to Êpo, a dot of a place lying in a sea of grass. 133

Êpo (this is the regular romanisation of the Chinese
characters, pronounced Obaw) is a small walled village and 361
former fort situated in a shallow valley sloping from east
to west, surrounded by grassy downs and backed by rocky
snow capped mountains. The elevation is probably between
11,000 and 12,000 feet, and there is no cultivation, the 241
necessary grain being brought up from below. The entire
community, composed of a few Mahomedan Chinese, 233
seemed to be engaged in the collection of wool, with
occasional purchases of musk and deer horns. The latter 381
(wapiti antlers) when old are quite cheap and are collected
and sent down to China for the manufacture of glue; when
in velvet they are extremely valuable and are ground up 886
to form the well-known Chinese medicine for revivifying
the old. This medicine is said to be very powerful, and I
was informed by a member of our party, who here purchased
a pair for a friend, that care must be exercised in taking
a dose to see that the powder comes equally from both
antlers, otherwise there is a grave danger that the patient
may be revivified on one side only! Musk may also be 303
profitably purchased at Êpo, and for some days afterwards
our caravan was redolent with it. Wherever one may pack
a pod of musk it is guaranteed to make its presence widely
known. The advantage of buying musk at a place like Êpo,
apart from its cheapness, is that one is pretty certain to get
the genuine article, adulteration being widely practised in
the trade in China.

Êpo appears to lie actually on the Kansu-Kokonor border 487
(though boundaries are vague in those parts), and its
position is of some strategic importance as commanding
one of the few routes from Kansu and Mongolia up to the
Kokonor, north of Hsining. We were met here by some
Mahomedan braves sent up from the Hsining and Tatung

487 neighbourhood to escort us down to those parts, for we had now again entered the Mahomedan sphere. Life in Êpo must be a trifle monotonous for the wool buyers. It was about the most distant and isolated spot we reached on all our travels, lying some forty to fifty days' journey from the coast or the nearest railway.

2: Teichman G-5 (1919) 1921 AF13 Northwest China AF13

CHAPTER XII

FROM ÊPO SOUTH ACROSS THE KOKONOR GRASS COUNTRY TO HSINING, AND THENCE BACK TO LANCHOU FU

Grass lands and snow mountains—Gold washing—Kokonor Mongols—Yungan—Pei Tatung—Passage of Tatung River and Tapan Shan—Tatung or Maopeisheng—Chinese place-names in foreign guise—Hsinch'eng and a loop of the Great Wall—Hsining—Chinese control over the Kokonor territory—Kansu wool trade—Kansu ponies—Hsining to Lanchou Fu—Aborigines—Defile of Laoya—Sandstone and loess—Copper—Lanchou water melons.

FROM Êpo the trail runs south for three very long stages, 487
each one probably well over 30 miles in length, across the
grass country on the Kokonor border. Along this border 361
stretches an old line of walled military posts, Êpo, Yungan, 133
and Pei Tatung, which make up the stages, and the grass
lands being otherwise uninhabited except by a few nomads,
it is necessary for the traveller unprovided with tents to
cover each of these long marches in the day.

Leaving Êpo the track runs south-east up the flat grassy
valley, which is dotted with the black tents of Tibetan
nomads and countless flocks of sheep. After some hours' 133
march the stream is left on the right hand and the path
rises gradually to an easy pass 40 li from Êpo. The view 487
from the summit (between 12,000 and 13,000 feet) is the
same on both sides, treeless grassy downs and rocky
mountains streaked with snow. Immediately to the south-east rises a gigantic snow mountain, being apparently another view of the snow range which we saw south of Kaoku Ch'eng, and which seems to lie immediately behind Liangchou. There appeared to be thousands of feet of snow on this mountain in early August, and its height must be some 18,000 feet or more. This pass, like the Wushao Ling, is the watershed between the Yellow River and the Central Asian basins, and we also gathered from the soldiers who

[p167]

133 accompanied us that in crossing it we passed again from
487 the Kokonor territory into Kansu.

From the pass the track drops steeply into a rough stony ravine, the stream in which is followed in a south-easterly direction for the remaining 70 li to Yungan Ch'eng. For the first half of the way the track is very bad, lying down the bed of a stream which is apt to rise in wet weather and render the road impassable; further on the going improves, the gorge opening out on to a flat grassy valley, and the last hour's march is over prairie, spoilt for riding,
[136] however, by the countless holes of a small rat-like rodent; in places the ground is alive with these little animals, dodging in and out of their holes like miniature marmots.
316 The bed of the stream flowing down from the pass is apparently rich in gold, and Mahomedan gold washers were at work at various points when we passed. They live in tiny tents and appear to pass a very hard life for small returns. The industry is under the patronage of the leading Mahomedan Generals. We followed the washing in several spots and always saw a few grains of gold dust produced; nuggets are, we were told, occasionally found. We had descended this stream almost from its source, so that in this case the gold-bearing rocks from which the gold has been washed cannot be far off. Very large profits can be made in ordinary times by buying this gold on the Kokonor and selling it in Shanghai.

342 Just before reaching Yungan we passed some Mongol tents, identical in appearance with the felt yurts to be seen
563 in the grass country north of Kalgan, and it seemed strange to come across these people here, whom one associates with summer trips to the north of Peking. The Kokonor territory is the meeting-point of the Tibetan and Mongol races, and here, as elsewhere, the black rectangular tents of the former may be seen almost side by side with the round grey tents
563 of the latter. It appears that the Mongols, who originally occupied the country far to the south, are gradually retreating
634 northwards before the encroachments of the more virile Tibetans. Unlike the Tibetans, who are in these parts all robbers by nature, the Mongols are peaceful and inoffensive herdsmen, who give the Chinese authorities no trouble. They are organized into Banners under their own Princes,

nominally responsible to the Chinese officials at Hsining. 563
Mongol tribes are found living in the bend of the Yellow 634
River, near the Golok country, and even as far south as the country between Jyekundo and Nagchuka towards Lassa, but appear to have become completely Tibetanised, and to retain only the tradition of their origin.

Yungan is a replica of Êpo, only poorer, an old walled 361
post with the interior almost entirely in ruins. It lies not 563
far from the Tatung River, surrounded by grassy downs and overlooked by rocky snow-capped ranges. One is here on the reverse side of the outer barrier range of the Nan Shan, the snows of which provide the water for the streams which fertilize the Liangchou oases. This portion of the Kokonor border is the meeting-point of the four widely-spread races of High Asia, Chinese, Mahomedans, Tibetans, and Mongols.

From Yungan to Pei Tatung is another long march of 133
over 100 li. The trail runs east and then south-east across 487
undulating grass prairies dotted with herds of yak for 45 li to a solitary inn or ranch known as Paishui Ho, whence it continues across a plain, gradually approaching the Tatung River, to reach Pei Tatung. The going is excellent across grass all the way. Pei Tatung, lying on the left bank of the Tatung River, is another walled village mostly in ruins. Barley is grown in the neighbourhood, the first [243]
cultivation met with since entering the Pien Tu K'ou from Maying Tung. The valley of the Tatung River in this neighbourhood consists of a rich grass prairie bounded on either side by rocky snow-capped ranges; to the south the mountains approach close to the river; to the north they rise on the other side of the plain. Between Kueitê on the Yellow River and Kanchou in Western Kansu the Nan Shan consist of three huge parallel ranges, dividing off the valleys of the Tatung, Hsining, and Yellow rivers. We were now between the two highest and most northern of these ranges.

The following day's march occupied us from dawn till eight o'clock at night, the distance being called 100 li but entailing the passage of the Tatung River and of a high pass known as the Tapan Shan. The river, some eighty 133
yards wide (in August), deep, and very rapid, has to be crossed immediately on leaving Pei Tatung. Men and loads 487

491

491 are ferried across on a small raft of inflated skins (called
p'ifatzu), but the animals have to swim. Owing to the
133 rapidity of the current and the frail nature of the skin-raft
(a light wooden platform resting on nine blown-out yak
487 hides) the passage is rather exciting. Inducing the animals
to swim across was a long and tedious business, and not
without danger for them, but all our mules and ponies were
eventually got across with no worse damage than one pony
lamed. The water was icy, and the wretched animals were
shivering with cold when they emerged, notwithstanding
487 the season of the year, which was mid-August. Leaving the
river the path enters a narrow gorge in the mountains and
133 almost immediately commences to rise steeply. From the
river to the top of the pass (between 13,000 and 14,000 feet)
is a hard climb of four hours or so by a bad rocky trail. The
summit is a narrow ridge of bare rock composed of bright
green and red slabs of shale. We missed the view as we
reached the pass in a bitterly cold snowstorm, through
which I caught a glimpse near the top of some animals
which looked like wild sheep. This range is known locally
as the Tapan Shan, and is a most formidable barrier. It
821 is noted amongst the Chinese for its noxious vapours, which
are supposed to rise from the ground on the higher slopes,
and most of our party crossed it with scarves wound round
their faces; it is a waste of time trying to explain even to
educated Chinese that the air is not noxious, but only
rarified; they have not the least objection to your believing
in the rarified air theory, but intimate that they know better.
My experience of high passes on the borders of Kansu
and Szechuan is that the effects of rarified air are much
worse on the razor-backed passes, like the Tapan Shan,
than on even higher divides which are approached by easy
slopes.

133 The ascent of the Tapan Shan is steep enough, but the
descent on the other side is much worse, and the trail
487 very rough and rocky. Eventually a gorge is reached,
which is followed for three hours' march to a solitary
Mahomedan inn called Tuchia T'ai. By the time we reached
485 this spot, although the snow had turned into rain as we
descended, and then ceased altogether, everyone was pretty
well tired out; but the accommodation was limited, and the

canny Mahomedan innkeeper, seeing such a large party of 485
officials and soldiers (everywhere unwelcome guests owing
to their custom of helping themselves to what they want and
not always paying for it), assured us it was only 30 or 40
li to Tatung Hsien by a good road; so we took the road 133
again after a rest, and had another weary six hours' march
before getting in. The road lies down a narrow picturesque 487
valley, in which trees, farms, and cultivation make their
appearance again, and finally debouches on to a broad and [241]
fertile valley, closely cultivated and thickly populated, which
is crossed to reach Tatung Hsien. I have but the vaguest
idea of the latter part of this long march, which was finished
by the light of lanterns in the dark, beyond remembering
that we forded a stream running in various branches just
before getting in, and narrowly missed taking an evening
bath on more than one occasion.

Tatung Hsien is a prosperous city, the centre of a fertile 361
corn-growing valley populated largely by Mahomedans.
The elevation is about 8000 feet and the wheat was ripening
for harvest during the middle of August. It reminded us
somewhat of Ho Chou. Being comfortably quartered here
in an old military yamen, we enjoyed a welcome day's rest.
Tatung Hsien is also known locally by its old name of
Maopeisheng, and usually appears on foreign maps under
that name in various guises. If a traveller in China, unacquainted with Chinese characters and their usual romanisation, writes down the names of places as they sound to his
ear, the results are often unrecognizable; further confusion
is entailed by the varying forms of romanisation in use in
different European languages. There are several townships
called Tatung in Western Kansu; they are sometimes distinguished by being referred to as Tatung Hsien, Nan
Tatung, Pei Tatung, and Hsi Tatung, but confusion often
results.

From Tatung to Hsining is a distance of 110 li by a good 487
cart track down a fertile and well-cultivated valley past 133
numerous farms and villages. The march may be divided
into two by halting at the walled township of Hsin Ch'eng,
40 li out, where the valley narrows to a defile and is barred
by an old wall with a gate and the inevitable likin barrier. 712
This is considered by some to be a branch of the Great

712 Wall; if this is so, the old gate and wall at T'ungmen Kuan,
between Labrang and Ho Chou, is probably a portion of
the same loop, which must have been constructed to protect
the Hsining region against the incursions of Tibetans or
Mongols from the Kokonor, and the course and history of
133 which it would be interesting to trace. The road eventually
debouches on to the city of Hsining, lying in a small cultivated
489 plain of loess formed by the junction of three valleys, the
Pei Ch'uan from Tatung Hsien, the Hsi Ch'uan from Tanko
T'ing, and the Nan Ch'uan from T'a-erh Ssu (Kumbum),
the combined streams going to make up the Hsining River.

[361] Hsining is one of the chief cities of Kansu, being the
[241] centre of a region of fertile corn-growing valleys, producing
wheat, barley, and particularly beans. Its commercial
439 importance arises from its position near the Kokonor
648 border, and together with Tanko T'ing, a day's journey
further west, it commands the bulk of the valuable Kokonor
trade in skins, furs, deer horns, musk, gold, and particularly wool. A state of passive hostility has reigned between China and Tibet since the collapse of Chinese power
in Lassa consequent on the revolution, and the Szechuan-Tibetan trade through Tachienlu has suffered greatly
thereby; the Hsining and Tanko trade, on the other hand,
has continued uninterruptedly throughout these troubles,
and has perhaps even increased. As elsewhere on this
border this trade is largely in the hands of the Mahomedans.
487 Before the Mahomedan rebellion of 1860–70 the Hsining-Kokonor road to Lassa was the most frequented route
between China and Tibet, but was then replaced by the
Szechuan road through Tachienlu; now it is coming into
361 its own again. The interior of the city is fairly prosperous in
appearance as far as Kansu towns go, but by no means
indicative of the commercial and political importance of the
place. The east suburb, the former Mahomedan quarter, is
still completely in ruins, a relic of the last Mahomedan
rebellion in 1895, when the city successfully withstood a
siege by the rebels. The walls are particularly formidable
and well built.

636 Hsining, as well as being the seat of a Taoyin and a
Mahomedan General, has always been the residence of the
high Chinese official controlling the immense territory of

similarly on the grass lands north of Peking a *Hsi K'ou* 231
Ma (pony from the Western Passes, i.e. Kansu) is a drug 492
in the market; and both are useless on the stone paved paths south of the Ch'inling Shan, where the diminutive stallions of Szechuan, Yunnan, and Kueichou alone are employed. Small horses from Turkestan are also often seen in Kansu, but they are not as satisfactory to use as the native ponies. A *sine qua non* of all travelling ponies is that they should be able to *tsou*, which means the smooth amble or pace of four to five miles an hour always used by the travelling horseman in Eastern Asia; a pony that cannot *tsou* is practically worthless as a mount in Chinese eyes, and the reason will be apparent to anyone who has tried to do a long journey on a pony which has no pace between a slow walk and a slow trot.

From Hsining to Lanchou there are two roads, a cart 487
track *via* P'ingfan in eight stages, and a mule road down the
Hsining River in six stages; we followed the latter. The 133
first day's march is one of 75 li down the valley, which is most of the way a mile or so wide and bounded by bare dreary hills of loess and red sandstone patched with a white
alkaline efflorescence, to the village of Changch'i Chai. [361]
Twenty-five li out at the hamlet of Hsiaohsia K'ou the hills close in to form a short defile, and the road crosses the river by a good bridge. Much of the valley is an arid waste like the hills, as the river runs part of the way in a trough at a lower level, thus rendering irrigation impossible. The next stage is one of 80 li to the village of Kao Miaotzu. The trail runs down the valley, fertile where irrigation can be practised; it passes through a rocky defile 15 li out and reaches the small district city of Nienpo 50 li out. Occasional glimpses are caught of the high range to the south separating
the Hsining River from the Yellow River. There is a curious [563]
mixture of races in this neighbourhood, including some people locally called *T'u Jen*, who were described to us as "tame" aborigines, and some Mahomedans who are said to speak a Mongolian dialect. There is plenty of subject matter for the ethnologist's study in Western Kansu, as in Western Szechuan and Yunnan.

From Kao Miaotzu the road continues down the cultivated valley for 20 li to the village of Laoya. Here the

487 valley narrows to a rocky gorge, and the cart track branches off towards P'ingfan. The mule trail through this defile, 133 which is some 40 li in length, is a nightmare of a path, especially in wet weather, being very rough and narrow, ledged in the cliff side above the roaring waters of the Hsining River; two-thirds of the way through there is an opening and an inn, Yangchia Tientzu, where we had a welcome rest. From the eastern end of this gorge to Hsiangt'ang, the end of the stage, is a distance of ten li. The peculiarity of the valley in this neighbourhood is that the cultivated fields are entirely covered with large stones which are placed there on purpose, in order, we were told, to [244] preserve the moisture in the ground. These stone-covered fields produce most excellent melons of various kinds, and the sight of the huge juicy fruit apparently growing out of bare stones is a remarkable one.

Just below Hsiangt'ang the Tátung River is crossed by [491] a good wooden bridge at the point where it debouches from a defile in the mountains on to the valley of the Hsining River; it is here less than twenty yards wide, but very deep and rapid, and flows between almost perpendicular cliffs of rock; though it contains much the greater volume of water, it joins the Hsining River in the form of a tributary, issuing from a cleft in the mountains on to the open valley of the latter. From here the trail continues down the arid valley, being rough and stony most of the way, especially where it climbs in and out of side nullahs or ascends the face of the cliff. Fifty li out a ruined wall and fort are passed, barring the valley at a narrow point, and just before reaching the village of Hotsuitzu, the end of a stage of 75 li, the river washes the left-hand side of the valley, and the weary traveller is forced to follow a narrow footpath high up the face of the sandstone cliff; here a block of sandstone, becoming detached from higher up on the cliff and hurling itself into the torrent below, only missed by a few feet bringing the career of the principal member of the expedition to an abrupt termination. The valley round the village of [361] Hotsuitzu is desolate in the extreme, bare red sandstone with a layer of yellow loess superimposed like icing on a cake. It is difficult to persuade oneself that this loess was not laid down by water. One of the arguments in favour of the aerial origin of the loess is the absence in it of fossil 487 shells of water animals; but so far as I know such fossils 133 are equally absent in re-deposited loess obviously laid down by water. If the great rivers of South America have deposited the soils of the Argentine pampas, there seems little reason to doubt that the Yellow River has done the same for North China. The desert mountains round the lower end of the [135 Hsining River valley are rich in copper, and before the 316] Revolution a mine was being worked in the neighbourhood with the assistance of a foreign engineer and foreign machinery; it appears to have suffered the fate common to all Chinese official enterprises of this nature, but its failure was not, so far as I am aware, due to any deficiency in the quality or quantity of the ore.

From Hotsuitzu the road continues down the valley which debouches on to the Yellow River 55 li further on. The latter can be crossed by a ferry here, but the path [491] usually followed ascends through a desolate defile past a number of salt pans to a loess plateau, whence it descends to a ferry. The Yellow River is here some 200 yards wide and is crossed by means of a large ferry-boat taking animals. A further hour's march down the Yellow River valley through irrigated fields brings one to the township of Hsin Ch'eng, the end of a stage of 75 li.

From Hsin Ch'eng to Lanchou Fu is a march of 70 li by a good road down the valley through fertile irrigated fields backed by desert hills. This stage can be accomplished [501] rapidly and easily by taking passage on one of the small skin rafts, numbers of which descend the river in the month of August laden with water melons for the Lanchou market. These rafts, composed of a light framework resting on a few inflated skins, are usually small enough and light enough to be carried back up stream on the shoulders of their owners. We were fortunate in striking the valleys above Lanchou during the height of the melon season. The dry 244 heat in these arid valleys at that time of the year was at times truly terrific, and the melons, of which we consumed large quantities on the road, were delicious. The best melons in China are grown in this neighbourhood. We found four varieties; the *tsui kua* and the *hsiang kua*, small and very fragrant sweet melons; the *hsi kua*, the ordinary

244 water melon, here grown to perfection, not the insipid watery pulp it is in many provinces, but a huge mass of juicy fruit of the most delicate flavour; and the *ta kua*, a tasteless variety fed to sheep and goats, and grown for its seeds. We were told that there is only one other melon which can compete with those of Lanchou for juiciness and delicacy of flavour, and that is the *Hami kua*, from Hami in Turkestan.

487 Our round tour of North-Western Kansu, *via* Liangchou, Chenfan, Êpo, and Hsining, a distance of about 700 miles, had occupied a little more than a month.

CHAPTER XIII

FROM LANCHOU FU DOWN THE YELLOW RIVER TO NINGHSIA AND PAOT'OU, AND THENCE OVERLAND TO KUEIHUA CH'ENG AND RAILHEAD

Yellow River rafts—Currency in the North West—Through the desert hills to Powan—Kansu mules—Sandstone caves on the Yellow River—Chingyuan—Gorges and rapids—Goral—Wufang Ssu—Chungwei—Rafts abandoned for boats—Kuangwu gorge—Irrigation works—Chinch'i and Mahomedan rebellion—Steam and motor navigation on the Yellow River—Ninghsia—Yuan Shih-k'ai's attempt to become Emperor—Wool boats for journey to Paot'ou—Shihchu Shan (Shihtsuitzu)—The Ordos—Mongol brigands—Liquorice root—Paot'ou—Tibetan lamaism in Mongolia—Kueihua Ch'eng—Feng Chen and railhead.

AFTER returning to Lanchou from Hsining we had finished 487
our work in Kansu and were free to choose the easiest way
back to the coast. Needless to say after so many months 133
on the road we decided to return by the Yellow River. For some distance below Lanchou the river breaks its way through a series of mountain ranges, flowing in alternate gorges and rapids, and Chinese travellers taking this route usually go overland to Chungwei, about eight days' march, and take boat from there. The prospect of another long desert journey was not attractive, however, and at first we decided to start on the river from Lanchou itself and chance the rapids; but were eventually persuaded to go overland for three days' march to a village called Powan; thus avoiding the most dangerous rapids which occur immediately below Lanchou. From all I heard on the subject I gather that these rapids really are very dangerous; certainly the ones between Powan and Chungwei are quite exciting enough.

The safest way of descending the rapids of the upper [502]
Yellow River is by large rafts, which stand a great deal of
knocking about amongst the rocks and rapids without 501
breaking up, and the officials had very kindly arranged for four of these rafts to be placed at our disposal, two for the ponies and two for ourselves. These rafts were thirty to

[p. 179]

501 forty feet in length by ten to fifteen in breadth, with the lumber piled up in the centre to form a platform a foot or so above the water, on which we pitched our tents; I have seldom struck a pleasanter method of travel in China, the only objection being the floor of pine logs, which meant that if one dropped any small article it was irrecoverable except by taking the raft to pieces. We subsequently learned that we had been lucky in securing particularly fine rafts, as they consisted of a flotilla of telegraph poles *en route* from the Kokonor forests above Hsining to Ninghsia for the construction of a new telegraph line from that place across the Ordos desert to Paot'ou.

431 We were delayed a few days in Lanchou while our rafts were being got ready and various other preparations being made. It is as well to put a few days' provisions on board to last till one gets to Chungwei; all kinds of presents were thrust upon us in the way of supplies by our hospitable hosts, the Governor and his staff, including a skin bag of the famous dried apricots which are thus exported from Central Tibet—or perhaps they even come from India. 436 A new supply of silver had also to be secured, for at the time we were in Kansu the old-fashioned lumps of silver and strings of cash were still the only currency available; two years later travelling in Shensi and Szechuan we were able to use silver dollars and copper cents even in the most out of the way parts, a great convenience; the buying up of the cash for the export of the copper they contain, which is now going on so extensively throughout China, may be illegal, but it is hardly to be regretted by the tourist in the interior, if it means the gradual disappearance of this dirty and cumbersome form of currency.

● 487 We finally left Lanchou on August 26 on our overland march to Powan, distant three marches of 65, 80, and 70 li 133 respectively. The road runs down the left bank of the Yellow River for about 15 li, and then, turning north up a gully, winds through a maze of low waterless hills of loess for the [36] rest of the way to the walled village of Ch'ang Ch'uantzu in the valley of a brackish rivulet, the end of the first stage. The second day's march is through similar desert hills to the hamlet of Hsikou. In places the small shallow valleys are cultivated and produce millet and inferior melons, but

the landscape is dreary in the extreme, the population scanty 133
and miserably poor, supplies non-existent, and the water, 487
where it is found, brackish. The third day's march is through
similar country until, 50 li from Hsikou, the trail debouches
from these barren hills on to a small irrigated plain alongside
the Yellow River, which here issues from a cleft in the
mountains; at the further end of the plain lies the long
straggling village of Powan. To the north and south are [361]
bare desolate mountains.

At Powan we abandoned our train of Kansu pack-mules. 492
These particular mules, each carrying between two and three
hundred pounds, had accompanied us for three to four
months, during which period they had covered over 2000
miles without a hitch, with never a sore back, and never one
sick or lame. The Kansu mule is perhaps the finest in the
world; his only drawback is that he requires a lot of grain
and does not do well in the grass country. The muleteers,
Kansu men, walked the entire distance and never gave us
any trouble whatsoever; both they and their animals seemed
capable of going on for ever as long as they both got plenty
to eat. The Kansu pack-mules are all entires, and their
strength and endurance are simply astounding; the mares
are worked in carts.

We found our rafts waiting for us, having accomplished 501
safely in a few hours the journey which had taken us three
days. Two of them were fitted out to take our ten ponies,
and two others had tents pitched for our accommodation;
another carried the soldiers of our escort, and two more
were laden with odds and ends of merchandize belonging
apparently to the owner of the lumber. By midday the
whole flotilla of seven were swirling down the river under
the autumn sun, and as we reclined in front of our tents
and watched the sandstone cliffs shoot by after so many
months of mountain and desert we felt thoroughly at peace
with things generally. The river flowed between low hills of 133
red sandstone with loess superimposed, grass covered on
the right bank and desert on the left. In places small [376]
plains, like that in which Powan lies, opened out on either
side; they were always irrigated by huge water wheels, of
exactly the same type as those so common in Szechuan, and
their green trees and fertile fields formed a striking contrast
to the background of desert hills.

Over to the background of desert hills. The red sandstone cliffs bordering the river are pocked with square caves similar to those on the Min River and other streams in Szechuan. 342 The origin and use of these caves, whether they are old tombs or the former dwelling-places of an aboriginal race, are, I believe, still unknown. Here on the Yellow River several of them were inhabited and provided with ropes and ladders as means of access. I should have liked to have visited the inhabitants, but it was quite impossible to stop the heavy rafts in the swift current under the base of a perpendicular cliff of rock; it is very strange that anyone should want to live in a cave half-way up a sandstone cliff overhanging the Yellow River, with no other means of access but a rope or ladder up or down the rock, unless it be the inherited custom to do so, or as a refuge against robbers. In my experience these square-faced caves, which are of an entirely different style of architecture to the round-arched caves in the loess in which millions of Chinese still dwell, are only found in the faces of sandstone cliffs overlooking rivers.

[361] Three hours below Powan we reached the district city ● 487 of Chingyuan Hsien on the right bank of the river; it lies on an old main road from Shensi to Lanchou *via* Haich'eng 133 which was in general use before the construction of the present road across the Liupan Shan, and appears still to [454] carry a certain amount of traffic, mostly camel caravans. The valley opens out in this neighbourhood and there are cultivated strips along both banks for a space. Four hours 133 below Chingyuan the river, hitherto flowing north-east, is running north-west between sandstone cliffs owing to the incidence of a range of mountains on the right front; this range appears to me to connect the main Nan Shan range with the Liupan Shan, which itself seems to run S.E. to join the Ch'inling Shan near Paochi, thus forming one continuous barrier trending across North West China from N.W. to S.E.; but this is only a guess. Near here we tied up for the night to some rocks on a shelving sand-bank.

Two hours further on the mountains are reached and the river enters a series of bare rocky gorges hemmed in by precipitous cliffs of red sandstone and shale, opening out in places to reveal a desolate wilderness of reddish mountains

501 to remain until she falls to pieces. The Revolution was probably partly the cause of the abandonment of this progressive enterprise, as has been the case in so many others.

502 133 The shifting channel is said to be the chief obstacle to steam navigation on the upper Yellow River. There should, however, be a profitable opening for motor boats between Ninghsia and the important mart of Paot'ou, or even from Chungwei down to Hok'ou where the river takes its southerly bend and enters the Shansi mountains. Above Chungwei, to Lanchou, a special type of high-powered shallow draft vessel, similar to that in use on the upper Yangtze, would be required to overcome the rapids, and the volume of trade and traffic is not likely to justify such an enterprise for many years, if ever. But with the Kalgan-Kueihuach'eng railway pushing on towards the Yellow River and Paot'ou, a motor boat service from that place to Ninghsia would revolutionise the existing means of communication between the coast and Kansu and the North West. Paot'ou is an entrepôt of increasing importance for the import and export trade of the North West and there would be no lack of traffic; the one great objection would be the suspension of the service in the winter. It usually takes months nowadays to reach Ninghsia from the coast going up stream; with a combined motor boat and railway service, even if the latter stopped short at Kueihua, it could be reached in a few days. Below Hok'ou and the southern bend of the river steam or motor navigation is out of the question owing to the many gorges and rapids, one of which, we were told, near the Yümen K'ou, amounts to a small waterfall. Below Yümen K'ou (Lung Men) the gorges come to an end, but beyond T'ungkuan, where the river turns east, more rapids occur, including those at Sanmen, which are said to be impassable for upward bound boats. The navigable section of the upper Yellow River is therefore confined to the Hok'ou-Paot'ou-Ninghsia-Chungwei section, which, however, forms the necessary link between Kansu and the Kalgan railway extension leading to the coast.

133 487 Below Chinch'i the river is a broad and placid stream flowing between irrigated and densely populated plains. Beyond Ling Chou the land on the right bank rises, irriga-

tion comes to an end, and the fertile plain gives way to a 133
sandy waste. Eventually, after some twenty-seven to thirty 487
hours of actual drifting down stream from Chungwei,
exclusive of halts, we reached the walled fort of Hung
Ch'eng, which is, so to speak, the port of Ninghsia, lying [554]
on the right bank at the point where the Great Wall and the
main trail from T'aiyuan *via* Suitê to Ninghsia strike the
Yellow River. Behind it the land rises in sandy uninhabited
downs, the beginning of the Ordos desert. The river is here
about three-quarters of a mile wide and is crossed by a ferry. [471]
Ninghsia lies 40 li inland on the opposite side.

As our ponies had not yet turned up on their overland 487
journey from Chungwei we found ourselves stranded on
the river bank opposite Hung Ch'eng, until the Ninghsia
authorities, learning of our arrival, sent some animals down
to meet us. The trail to Ninghsia leads across a strip of
waste land five li in extent stretching along the river, and
then runs for the rest of the way through irrigated fields,
mostly under rice, traversing several large irrigation channels.
There is probably more rice (though of an inferior kind) [243]
grown on the Yellow River plains between Ninghsia and
Chungwei than anywhere else in China north of the Ch'inling
Shan; but also this was the only region in Kansu where we [136]
were troubled by mosquitoes, the elevation being under
4000 feet. We spent a few days in Ninghsia, being hospitably
entertained by the Mahomedan General and other officials.
It is a large town, and a political and commercial centre of
some importance, but the interior is very dilapidated and
poor-looking. It is the centre of trade with the Mongols 439
of the Ordos and the Alashan (the latter really the name of
a Mongol state rather than a mountain range), chiefly in
wool and sheep and goat skins; a particularly fine lamb- [281]
skin, called *t'anyang p'i* is a noted local product, as well as
felts and carpets. An old Ninghsia rug is of considerable [286]
value anywhere. The local Mahomedan General, Ma Fu-
hsiang, who is also a sort of Military Governor of North- 635
Eastern Kansu, is one of the leading Mahomedans of the
Province, and represents a fine soldierly type of Chinese
Moslem. He served under T'ung Fu-hsiang in Peking in
1900 and commanded the Dowager Empress' escort on the
retreat to Hsian. The Manchus had no more loyal servants

packing the wool which comes down from Western Kansu [439] by boat on the river and by camel overland, and in collecting [236] local produce from the Mongols. The overland trail from Paot'ou, eight to ten marches from well to well across the 487 Ordos desert, here strikes the Yellow River, crosses by a ferry, and continues up the plain to Ninghsia. Supplies must be laid in at Shihchu Shan to last to Paot'ou, little or nothing being obtainable in the Ordos *en route*.

Leaving Shihchu Shan we passed finally out of Kansu 133 into the Ordos. The river runs for some hours with a rapid current between bare mountains, which gradually recede and give way to sandy desert. After about twelve hours drifting down stream Tengk'ou, a desolate little village in the desert on the left bank, is reached, and some eight hours further on the township of Santaohotzu is passed, where there is a Catholic Mission and a considerable Chinese [797] population engaged in agriculture round the old branches of the Yellow River. The river banks on either side are lined much of the way with a belt of willow scrub, which furnishes a most useful supply of fuel to the boats going up and down. The current is fairly strong through the Ordos, considering 502 the level nature of the country, but we were frequently compelled to tie up to the bank to wait for the wind to drop. On one of these occasions my five ponies, which were being exercised on the bank, took alarm at something and galloped off into the desert. We followed them for miles and then lost their tracks on some hard stony ground. The country was desert without a sign of life except for numerous antelope and an occasional camel turned out for the summer, and the boatmen expressed the opinion that we should never see the ponies again unless we chanced on them further down stream, as though they had galloped off inland they would be bound to return to the river for water. On the following day after having drifted many miles further down we fortunately spied a Mongol watering his camels on the bank, who turned out to have met the ponies inland, and they were soon recovered, very hungry, thirsty, and tame.

Lower down we met again and again with the most violent winds, necessitating long and weary delays in the desert. There was some trouble with Mongol brigands going on in this neighbourhood, and on one occasion shots

lawlessness of the past few years, which fact, however, only
makes its commercial prosperity all the more remarkable. It 439
evidently owes its importance to its position as the most
westerly outpost of Chinese trade in this direction, and like
Kueihua Ch'eng, is one of the starting-points for caravans
going west. The Mahomedans appear to form an important
element in the trading community. There was no civil
official at the time of our visit, but a large garrison of
soldiers; the inhabitants seem a rough lot, as is to be
expected in a frontier town.

At Paot'ou our river journey came to an end and we 133
hired carts to convey our baggage to Kueihua Ch'eng, 487
distant four marches, the usual stages being, Salach'i 90 li,
T'aossu Ho 70 li, Pihsuehchi 90 li, and Kueihua Ch'eng
80 li. The road runs east across an undulating cultivated
plain accompanied by the Tach'ing Shan range on the north.
Except for some marshy patches of grass land which have
to be crossed, the going is good, and I have never known
Chinese carts to travel faster, our ponies frequently having
to trot to keep up with them. The traffic was surprisingly [484]
busy on the road which evidently carried a bigger trade than
any trail in Kansu. The inhabitants are apparently all 563
Chinese, but at a farm where we stopped for a meal the
owner and his wife though dressed in Chinese clothes could
only speak Mongol; and another sign of the former Mongol
population is a picturesque lamasery on the mountain side, 792
which from its appearance might equally well have been
situated on the Kokonor border. The Mongol lamas are 796
very like their Tibetan colleagues, as is shown by the
accompanying photographs (see frontispiece) of a so-called 535
Devil Dance, which were taken at a big monastery in
Eastern Inner Mongolia, and represent the "Dance of the
Black Hat," the commonest religious dance in Tibet. It
represents an incident in Tibetan history namely the killing
of King Glangdarma, the notorious persecutor of Buddhism,
by the lama Dpalgirdarje in A.D. 842; the lama danced before
the King in the costume shown in the photographs,
concealing in his broad sleeves a bow and arrow. The photo- 796
graphs facing pages 200 and 202, which were taken at the 782
same Mongolian monastery, also represent purely Tibetan
ceremonies, namely the *torma* offering for warding off

796 devils, and the circumambulation of the monastery by the figure of the coming Buddha seated in a car drawn by an [782] elephant, in this case a mock one. The extent of Asia covered by that curious form of Buddhism known as Tibetan Lamaism is very large, stretching as it does from the northern frontiers of India to the southern borders of Siberia, and from Ladak to the confines of Manchuria.

[36] Kueihua Ch'eng is another busy commercial town serving a hinterland extending to Kashgar, Kobdo, Ili, and 438 Uliassutai. Near by lies the old Manchu garrison fortress of Suiyuan, which gives its name to the new territory of Suiyuan; the latter includes parts of Inner Mongolia and Northern Shansi, and has its counterpart further east in the territory of Chahar, comprising portions of Eastern Inner 136 Mongolia and the Kalgan and Jehol regions of Chihli. These territories are administered on military lines. Kueihua is a good starting-point for a big-game shooting trip into the mountains further north, where remarkably fine sheep, a sort of *Ovis argali*, and wapiti can be secured, as well as the roe-deer and goral common in North China. With the Kalgan railway extension pushing on towards Kueihua, this is some of the best and most accessible big game ground in China nowadays.

487 We changed our carts at Kueihua Ch'eng and hired new ones to take us through the mountains to railhead at Feng 133 Chen, distant four long marches. The first stage is a march of 90 li to the mountain village of Shihjen Wan, the trail continuing east across the plain for six or seven hours and then running up a shallow valley for the rest of the way. Many of the higher mountain slopes were snow-clad, though the season of the year was only late September. On the following day another long march of 90 li up a valley and over a low pass brought us to the hamlet of Wuli Pa, lying on a sort of plateau of moorland country, the beginning of the grass lands of Eastern Inner Mongolia. It snowed heavily most of the day and we arrived cold, wet, and tired [485] to find the roughest of accommodation in a large cart inn. The third stage is still longer, called 110 li, to the village of T'iench'eng Ts'un, but the trail lying partly across grass country one can travel fast. The road descends through flat open valleys to a lake, where good wild-fowl shooting

can be had, and then ascends to another grassy plateau. 487
Herds of Mongolian ponies (the "China pony" of the 133
Treaty Ports) were to be seen, but the good pony country lies much further north-east, beyond Kalgan and Dolonor. The following day, September 26th, we accomplished our last march, 60 li to Feng Chen. It was freezing hard in the early morning, and we decided we had just completed our journey in time; for winter on these steppes of High Asia is very severe. The trail continues across the grass lands for two hours' march, and then runs down a broad cultivated valley plain for the rest of the way to Feng Chen, an unwalled township, and the railhead of the Peking-Kalgan-Kueihua extension line. [361]

A construction train took us down to Tatung Fu, an [496]
important town of Northern Shansi, where we were lucky enough to strike the weekly express, which runs through to [796]
Peking in one day. This was the end of our long journeys, and the reader, having accompanied us as far afield as Chengtu in Szechuan and Hsining and Liangchou in Kansu, is probably as tired of reading about them as the writer is of recording their description.

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927
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797 the Church, and the hospital, where he daily received men and women patients. At the time of our meeting his position in the city was amply assured, but many years previously the people of Pingliang had combined to refuse him all admittance by forbidding anyone to sell him food, and it was only due to the secret kindness of one woman in supplying him with a meal of flour and water pancakes each day for several months, that he existed at all; but in the end he overcame every opposition, outlived suspicion and came to be regarded with universal respect.

080 We studied together the map of Kansu, and he told us of his own various itinerant journeys to districts reputed to be almost uninhabited, but where large audiences had collected whenever he made halt to proclaim the Gospel. Laying his finger on a spot at the extreme North-Western boundary of the Province, he said: 'Here stands the Great City of Suchow. You who care so much for Kansu, this is the town which awaits your coming!'

CHAPTER III

THROUGH THE EARTHQUAKE AREA TO LANCHOW

• 487 On the second day after leaving Pingliang, we took the Pass which rises to nearly nine thousand feet over the Lupan Shan. All the morning we had followed the course of a rushing stream, which we crossed and
494 recrossed many times. It was still early winter, and the ice was not strong enough to bear the weight of our litters, so that we often had the unpleasant experience

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502 water was carrying considerable ice-floes, but one day, at a narrow part of the bed some miles further down, they were arrested, and in a few hours the whole river was piled up, mass on mass, with ice. The impact was so powerful that blocks were flung wildly about in all directions, and with one mighty solidifying spasm the iron grip closed upon the waters, and the Yellow River was ice-bound for months.

CHAPTER IV

LANCHOW TO LIANGCHOW

● 487 The journey from Lanchow to Liangchow can, under favourable conditions, be accomplished in one week. Half-way between lies the town of Pingfan, at the angle where the cross-roads leading westwards to Sining and Kokonor meet the main North-West road.

133 A few miles outside Lanchow we traversed the dry bed of an ancient inland-sea, circular in form. The high-water mark showed clearly far overhead near the top of the surrounding cliffs, where the stone was worn into the shape of pillars. The bed was strewn with finest sand, and all the water procurable was very salt.
253 It was here that we met the first herd of yak, which was being driven to Lanchow for slaughter, as a large amount of the beef sold in these cities of the North-West is yak meat.

376 The fourth day brought us to the Pingfan valley,
256 down which a watercourse rushed between banks of ice, supplying the power to work a number of flour mills which were grinding, even though their structure
788 was hung with enormous icicles. Here, for the first time, we passed a prayer-wheel, erected below a basin

138 712 the way. At a distance of about two miles a high gate-tower of many storeys came in sight, flanked on either side by a clay wall, which on the south stretched for seven miles to the foot of the Tibetan mountains. On this side lay green meadows richly watered by springs, and for this reason the name Kiayükwan has been given, meaning 'The Barrier of the Pleasant Valley.' The position of the fortress has indeed been well chosen in view of excluding invaders from the west, this being the narrowest point between naked hills on the north and south. Under the shadow of the walls a stream is crossed by a wooden bridge, and from here the path mounts steeply to the door of the southern quarter, where all the inns are situated. We passed through two great vaulted gates into the first enclosure, which holds within it the ruins of a small town, now mostly uninhabited. The splendid outer walls, with their loophole battlements and towers, and the Yamen and military barracks, still occupied, give an impression of mediaeval importance to a place which otherwise would be only a tumbledown village.

487 A most imposing gate led out on the north side, and beyond this, as far as eye could reach, was an undulating desert over which the wintry wind was blowing. A hundred yards from the gate a stone tablet proclaims this to be 'Earth's Greatest Barrier.' The scene was desolate beyond words, and if ever human sorrow has left an impress on the atmosphere of a place, it is surely at Kiayükwan, through whose portals for centuries past a never-ending stream of despairing humanity has defiled. Disgraced officials, condemned criminals, homeless prodigals, terrified outlaws, the steps of all these have converged to that one sombre portal, and through it have for ever left the land of their birth. The arched walls are covered with poems wrung from

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927
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487 broken hearts, nor can anyone leave China by this road without peculiar pain, and even tears.

> ' When I leave thy gates, O Kiayükwan,
> My tears may never cease to run.'

The most illustrious of all the exiles who have trod this *Via Dolorosa* was the great Sage and Philosopher, Lao-dze, who here turned his back on the land which had refused his teaching, and sought for himself an unrecorded grave in the wilderness beyond.

Among all those tragic inscriptions, from the day of our visit, one message of *Hope* now hangs, printed in crimson letters so large and clear, that every tear-filled eye can see it : ' *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*'

CHAPTER XVIII

A PRODIGAL SON

806
527 THE Chinese, together with other ancient peoples, observe the lunar month, and date their calendar by the Agricultural Year ; New Year's Day, consequently, falling irregularly between the last week of January and the middle of February, marks also the time for the sowing of the crops. The official calendar, issued by the Peking Board of Rites, is often at variance with local almanacs, so that we found the people of Suchow were much disturbed as to whether the first day of the first moon should be the coming Thursday or Friday. The question was not decided until Wednesday afternoon, when the Town Crier, beating a gong, patrolled the streets announcing in a loud voice, ' To-morrow is New Year's Day ! '

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060 bid her farewell, before she would permit the sacred
words to pass her lips she washed her face and combed
her thin hair, feeling it to be disrespectful to the One
True God to address Him unprepared. Such a soul as
this, met with on the road of life, one can never forget.
She was ripe for the Call; and she heard it, and was
glad.

361 The next city is Ansi, which also bids fair to dis-
133 appear under the encroaching sands, as these have
already drifted round it as high as the top of the wall.
It is a cold, storm-swept place, exposed on every side,
and with neither coal nor wood obtainable. The wind
132 is said to blow every day in the year, but in the winter
512 it is so fiercely terrible that all shops are closed, and
733 everything is at a standstill. Every household then
lives, eats, and sleeps on its dung-warmed *kang*, nor is it
surprising that so many while away the weary hours
487 with the fumes of the opium-pipe. Ansi lies at the
cross-roads, where the great track from Suchow turns
off towards Hami and Eastern Turkestan, meeting also
the main road to the Oasis of Tunhwang, four stages
to the south-west. The fame of Tunhwang had already
172 reached us. We had entertained at Suchow a party of
American archaeologists from Harvard University,
who had recently been there for the purpose of seeing
its art treasures. Not being able, however, to fulfil
their purpose, they were returning to Peking, carrying
away a rather unfortunate impression of the Tunhwang
population, and they warned us that we should find them
turbulent and somewhat rough-spoken. This did not
alarm us, however, as our search was for treasure of
a different kind, which called for excavation of another,
and less obvious nature.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE OASIS OF TUNHWANG

TUNHWANG is, in the opinion of the inhabitants of 484
neighbouring cities, so gay a place as to merit the
name of 'Little Peking,' but as four days particularly 487
hard travelling separate it from Ansi, which is the
nearest town, we were warned of hardship ahead in
getting there. We were therefore advised to fill every
available bottle, to carry a sack of bread and one of
flour, and to occupy every space left, with feed for the
animals. On leaving Ansi we made a straight line [133]
for a long volcanic range which we had already sighted
on coming, and which we now followed the whole way.
The aspect of these hills was different every hour,
seeming now near, now far, and blue, purple, or silver-grey,
according to the course of the sun. They were
bare of all vegetation, and scored by innumerable
watercourses, which disappeared into a gently-sloping,
barren, gravel plateau. The so-called inn, which [485]
marked each stage, was but a rude shelter inhabited by
two men, and the only water was a brackish well. The
last night was the hardest of all. The road had [135]
stretched over an expanse of salt, glittering in the star-light.
We had expected a good rest when we reached 484
the inn, but on arriving were told that the fodder supply
being now nearly exhausted, there would not be enough
left for another feed, so we must leave in four hours'
time, if the mules were to have strength left to pull us
through the deep sand now lying ahead. Accordingly,
after a brief halt we started, and at 4 a.m., chilled to
the bone by the biting wind, and utterly weary for want
of sleep, we felt almost at the end of our powers. The

The geographical position of the city is such as to render it a very important centre, standing as it does 487•
where roads from Lhasa, Mongolia, India and South 494
Siberia all converge. Merchants from Khotan, Yarkand and Kashgar travel this way, and it is not infrequent to meet a caravan of sixty donkeys which have travelled fifty days over the southern border of the Takla-Makan desert. Tunhwang is a town which has, 175
under various names, taken an important place in the history of the territory now known as North-West Kansu. In 165 B.C. there is record of its inhabitants being overcome in battle, and dispersed, reappearing later as the Indo-Scythians of the Punjab. Its more ancient name was Shachow—City of the Sands—and it is frequently marked by this name, on maps, at the present time. In A.D. 400 it was the capital of the State of Western Liang. It has been held by Tibetans, and used by the Chinese as an extreme outpost of defence against the Huns. Documents in the Indian, Khoroshti and Brahmi scripts had been excavated in the district, as well as in an unknown script resembling Aramaic.

Of the original city nothing now remains but a 361
ruined wall, and an enclosure mostly cultivated by 563
market-gardeners. In its stead has grown up a smaller town, on the opposite side of the river, the eastern suburb of which has become the business quarter, and is chiefly occupied by Moslem Turkis, who are now gradually possessing themselves of the land, so that it is common to see the scarlet dress and fluttering veil of the Moslem women at work in the fields. The reason 733
for this change in the population is not far to seek, 563
opium and its deadly influences being the cause. Rich and poor, old and young, farmers, tradesmen and artisans are all neglecting their employment for the opium-pipe, and it is freely admitted that the people

000 provincial capital, our continued presence in Suchow was of no further assistance to him.

Of the various routes by which we might reach England, that which would take us through Central China seemed the most precarious, as the armies of the War Lords were now on the move, and were preparing to besiege Sian. The route which would take us through Kashgar, Osh and by the Trans-Caspian Railway was temporarily unfeasible, and there would have been barely time to attempt the Karakorum Pass before the early snows made it impassable. For several years it had been our cherished plan to take a missionary journey across Central Asia, following one of the ancient trade-routes, and preaching the Gospel at every stage of the way. This now seemed to be the time for carrying the plan into execution.

• 487 After much deliberation, we decided on a route which would take us via Kiayükwan, Yümen and Ansi to the Turkestan border at Hsinghsinghsia; then across the desert to Hami; through the Pass of the Tian Shan Range at Tsikioking, and so to Kucheng and Urumchi; and from thence by a road still leading north-west, through Manas to Tsuguchak. From Chinese travellers we had learnt that we might expect to cross the Russian border at Kuswun, proceed to Lake Zaisan, and there board a Russian river steamer which would take us up the Irtish to Omsk, where finally we could join the Trans-Siberian Railway. We were also informed that if we arrived at Lake Zaisan later than the end of September, the last steamer of the season would have left.

600 Many had been the Chinese and Turki travellers with whom we had talked during the past three years, questioning them concerning the ancient trade-routes of Central Asia. The reports were so varied, however, and the calculations of the distances covered and the

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.487

Map of Sinkiang (Chinese Turkestan) marking each oasis on the main trade route across the Gobi Desert
THE HEAVY LINE INDICATES THE ROUTE FOLLOWED BY THE WRITERS

[FOLDED MAP (A)]

[end map]

3;Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927

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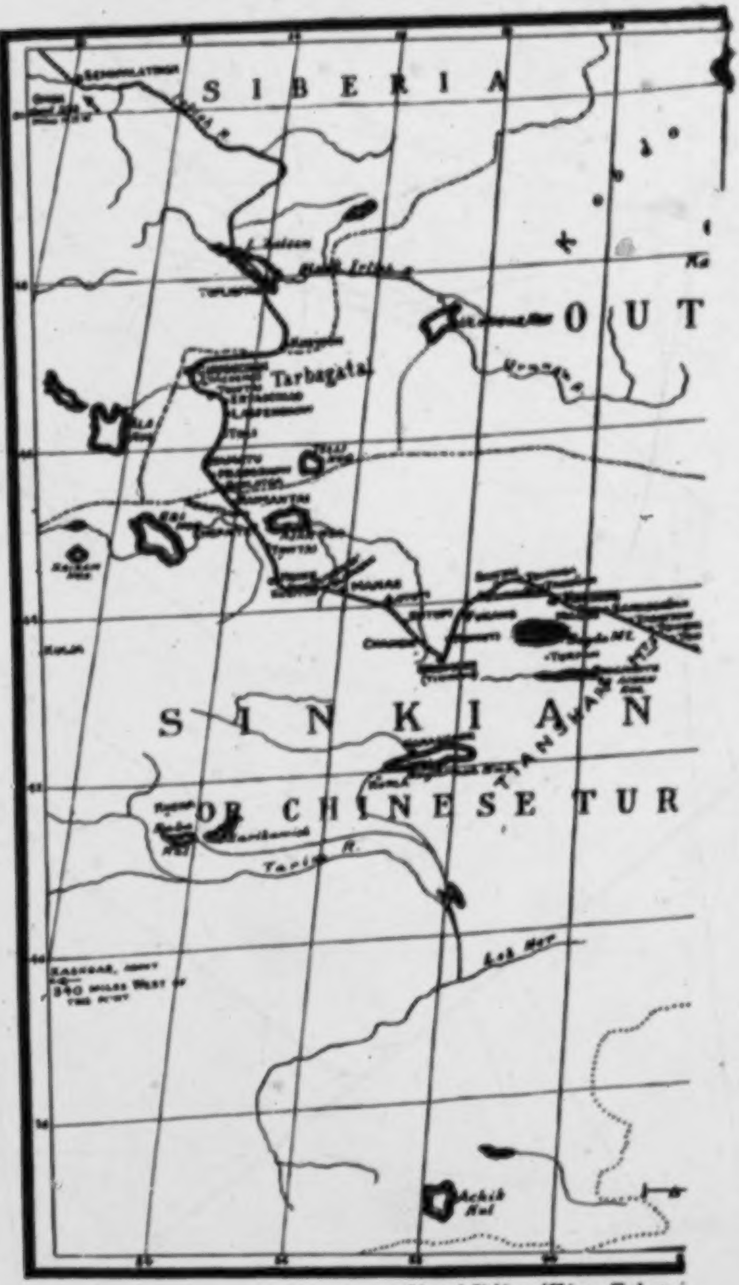
S I B E R I A
O U T
Tarbagatai
S I N K I A N
TIANSHAN
OR CHINESE TUR
Tarim R.
Lob Nor
KASHGAR,
340 MILES WEST OF
Achik Kul

Map of Sinkiang (Chinese Turkestan,
THE HEAVY LINE

[FOLDED MAP (B)]

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927

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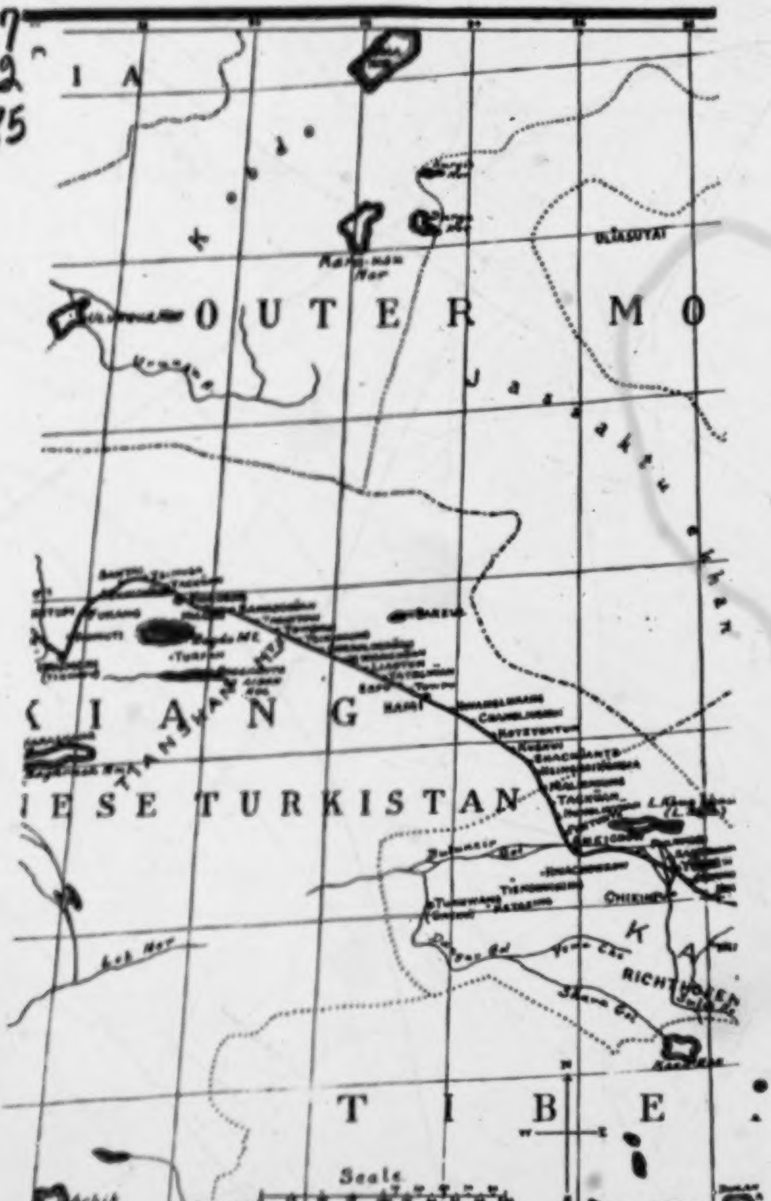
I A
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ULIASUTAI
HAMI
TIANSHAN
KIANG
ESE TURKISTAN
RICHTHOFEN
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Map of Sinkiang (Chinese Turkestan) marking each oasis on the main trade route across the Gobi

THE HEAVY LINE INDICATES THE ROUTE FOLLOWED BY THE WRITERS.

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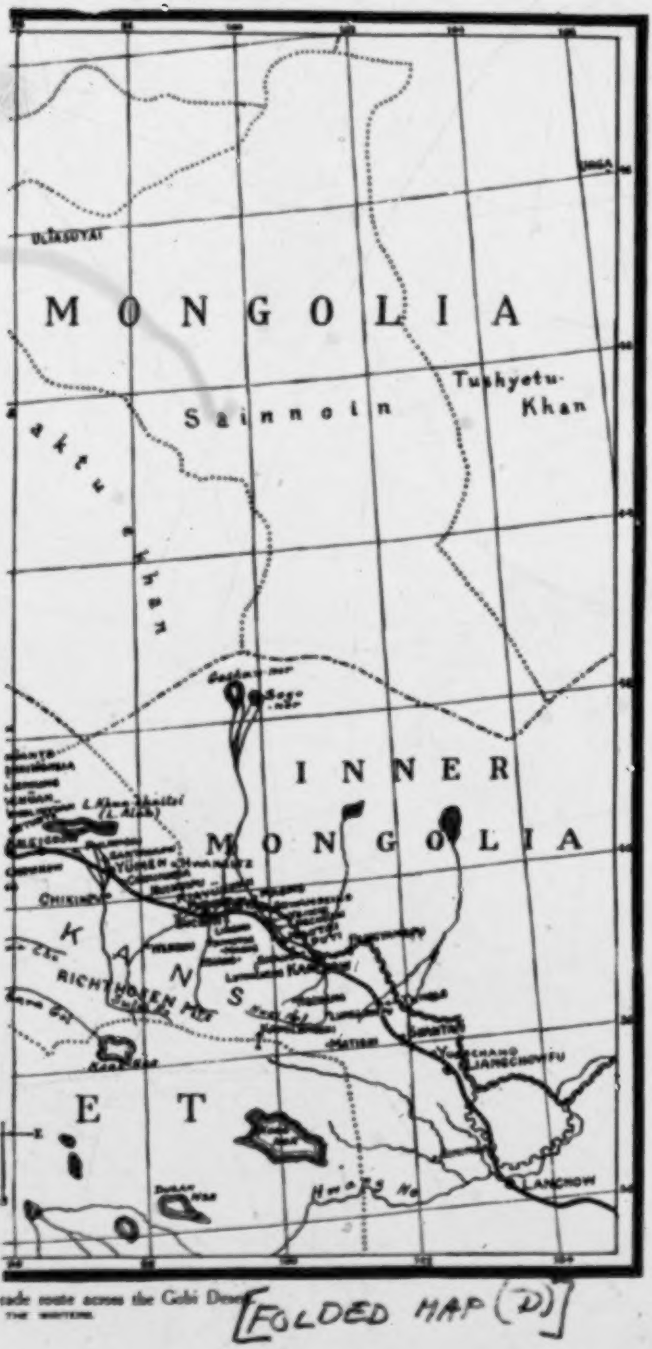
ULIASUTAI
URGA
MONGOLIA
Tushyetu-Khan
Sainnoin
aktu Khan
Gashun nor
Sogo nor
INNER MONGOLIA
YUMEN
CHIKIN
KANSU
RICHTHOFEN Mts
LIANGCHOWFU
LANCHOW
ET
Hwang Ho

ade route across the Gobi Des

[FOLDED MAP (D)]

it under heaven." 361

The common people usually call the city of Lanchow fu, Gao lan hsien, after the title of the sub-prefect or head of the district (hsien) who has his seat there and who chiefly deals with the people. (1) The city lies close to the right bank of the Hwang Ho where the latter narrows down for a short distance to a width of only 250 meters. There is no other place up and down the river where there is a similarly favorable spot for crossing over. 631

Each winter at this place the Yellow River is frozen over for at 133
least one and one-half months, so that even heavily-laden freight 481
wagons can drive across. The opening of this natural bridge which 527
took place toward the end of December was always a great festival occasion and was celebrated with great pomp. First of all the Gao lan hsien as fu mu kwan, i. e., father-mother-mandarin, as the patriarchally-minded Chinese calls his district chief, had to drive over the ice in his gala carriage, accompanied by a large retinue, in order to prove that the ice was safe. On the other hand, in fall and spring when the ice broke up, river traffic was often blocked for days or weeks. One could, perhaps, at the risk of one's life cross the raging stream between the ice floes on a raft of goat-skin bags. But in the spring when the ice had disappeared, the famous pontoon 491
bridge, the afore-mentioned wonder of the world, was set up at the expense of the provincial government. Twenty-two box-shaped wide boats of poplar wood were held together with heavy iron chains and especially with thick hemp ropes, as may be seen on Plate XXXIV. On top of these were laid unfinished planks, but so unevenly that one seldom dared ride across on horseback. Everywhere there were large holes, everywhere the planks rocked and tipped. The wooden railing, too, was more to look at than to lean on. Even Europeans regarded the bridge as a wonder of the world, but only /148/ to

1. This post of Gao lan hsien was supposed to be a very busy one but poorly paid. These officials were therefore usually transferred to a good sinecure after a year. If they knew how to make a good impression on their superiors and relieve them of a great deal of work, they usually got Tsin tschou in the following year. I heard of a mandarin who three times changed over from one of these posts to the other, i. e., in one year he had to supplement his salary, whereas in the next, his earnings were very good. [661]

gained control. Finally around 1081 Lanchow fu was again conquered by the Chinese under their brave eunuch general Li hsien, with the help of the Tibetans who, insofar as they were farmers, were subject to the Sung dynasty. (Tsing yuan, too, was snatched from the Hsi Hsia kingdom in the same year.) Since then the city has remained united with the kingdom. But the importance of the place may be seen from its earlier changeful fate. 712

The Yellow River which is of any visible use to the land and its people only insofar as it flows outside the Great Wall, cannot be easily crossed anywhere; certainly not on the Great Chinese Plain where the inhabitants call it their sorrow and affliction on account of its destructiveness. It once took me a full day on a ferry to get through at Kaifeng fu between the countless mud banks which are always in motion and constantly changing. Along the railroad line Peking-Hankow in Honan it forms an almost insurmountable obstacle even for our modern technical resources, because of its insecure mud bottom. Even though it does not contain a great deal of water, it is never easy to cope with at Lung men and in its entire middle course as far up as Lanchow fu. Finally, in Lanchow fu, almost where its Tibetan upper course begins there is a place where not only can the two banks be connected by a bridge without great difficulty, /149/ but where roads also lead down to it. The highway which connected Chinese culture with the Western world here crosses the Yellow River. Inasmuch as roads, to say nothing of highways, in China have, up to now, depended more on the accidents of nature than on the will and skill of man, and Kansu, which is by no means a flat country, possesses very few highways, it follows that every place where this natural road could push through was of particularly outstanding importance. This road, the ancient "silk road," leads out from the original sites of Chinese culture, out of the Wei Ho Valley and the Fen Ho Valley basin from Hsingan fu by way of Ping liang fu to the northwest, to Lanchow fu. It anxiously avoids large rivers which, as for example the upper Wei Ho, have cut deep ravines into the mountains and which only bridle paths and mule tracks can follow. It leads across loess country devoid of stones, past a few loess brooks and often for long distances on high ridges. Each year the summer rains tear up great holes in the road and interrupt traffic, but in the dry winter months trade and traffic flow cheaply and easily. Roughly, this road follows the watersheds between 487

● 487 the Wei River and the upper Yellow River. North of it the loess is still more compact, and on the way to the largest loess dune there was almost no better way of getting through. It is only when one again gets outside the Great Wall - as we have seen - that there is a larger trade route, from Tai yüan fu through Sui de tschou and to Ning tiao leang, but it permits wagon traffic only along certain stretches and leads across the Hwang Ho between the provinces of Shansi and Shensi, but in not a very comfortable fashion. The next larger traffic artery which conveniently connects the west with the east is the Kweihwa - Bau tu - Ninghsia road which avoids the Yellow River but leads through nomad country and thus its safety is entirely dependent on the more or less peaceful behavior of these nomads, and thus also for political reasons it has for centuries not been regarded as a large traffic artery.

631 But Lanchow fu is not merely the Hwang Ho bridgehead of the "silk road"; it is also the juncture of the roads leading up from South Kansu and Szechwan, as well as for the Tibetan roads that come from Hsining fu and Ho tschou. For this reason the city has also been made the seat of the tsung tu or tschi t'ai of Schen kan, that is, the residence of a vice-regent. Under the Manchu dynasty, under Emperor Kien lung around the middle of the 18th century, when Chinese power headed by Manchu had completely overcome the Kalmuk and the large territories of the West had to be newly conquered, the old, large province of Shensi was divided up into a smaller Shensi and a Kansu. (1) At that time the position of tsung tu, of the viceroy or governor-general was created, who first of all acted as civil governor of Kansu, but who, besides, /150/ had the general supervision of the civil- and military administration of Shansi and the vast Central Asiatic territories, which are called Sin kiang (pronounced: Hsin Tschiang) by the Chinese, i. e., "new

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[103] 1. The name Kansu (pronounced: Gan su) was formed from the characters of what were once the two most important cities in the western part of the province: Kanchow and Suchow. Shensi means "west of the pass"; it is the country that lay west of the strait of Tung kwan ting which we learned about in the second chapter. Shenkan, therefore, means the vice-kingdom of Shen (si) and Kan (su).

As a result of the last revolution the title of Tsung tu has now been abandoned and replaced by Tu tu.

place for the wealthier class of Lanchow fu. During the season there 529
the Chinese ladies are entertained with theater and festivals. There are /159/ woods on the slopes between the cliffs and a little mountain brook gushes merrily out of a narrow ravine. The Kansu know, as well as we do, where it is pleasant to be.

Beyond Kin hsien I was obliged, on the following days, to cross 133
this rocky mountain range, the Hsin lu Shan, the continuation of the Kwan Shan which earlier travelers had pointed out and which is made up of granite and chalk and sandstone rich in coal seams. Loess masses cover the slopes far up; but here, too, the peaks are free of this yellow, ugly covering. But at a height of 2,800 meters I had not yet got beyond the haze and dust which had enveloped the mountains and valleys in a blue atmosphere for one and one-half months now since the end of October when last it rained, or rather snowed. Every day the sky was cloudless; but visibility was so limited that the horizon and all the outlines of the mountains were indistinct. Behind, that is, southwest of these mountains - they form only a narrow chain like theater wings - one comes to the basin of the subprefecture Di dao tschou and into the environs of the Tao Ho, one of the most important tributaries of the Hwang Ho. In this basin, too, there is loess everywhere, but it is not very thick (about 40 centimeters). Below it there are soon to be found red tertiary and mostly horizontal layers of clay of huge proportions. These have molded the hilly and mountainous landscape of today and formed the valley which is several kilometers wide at the city of Di dao.

Di dao tschou belongs to the good cities of Kansu. It has possibly 361
15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants, tobacco manufacturing establishments, 487
many lumber companies connected with the spruce forests of the southern mountains, and is connected with Lanchow by a highway leading over the Kwan Shan. (1) Two important roads lead south from here and to the province of Szechwan, one over Min tschou and the other over Kung tschang fu.

The city of Di dao is already on the border of China. The Tibet- 631
ans appear as a new element among the Chinese and Mohammedans. 563
A Tibetan prince lives in the city itself, the so-called kia (pronounced dia) or tiao tu se (2) who has his own subjects. In the district of

1. Part of the mountain range Hsin lu Shan, just described. As we mentioned earlier, the Chinese does not name mountain chains but only mountain peaks.

2. T'u se or t'u sse (not to be confused with tu se or du se,

have only one-story houses with spacious yards. 361

According to my observations, Hsining fu is 2,300 meters above
sea level, while Hedin estimated only 2,265 meters, Grenard 2,250
meters and Filchner, on the other hand, by far the highest figure,
namely, 2,380 meters. It lies in the middle of a flat alluvial valley, two kilometers wide, the floor of which can be irrigated, which
fact determines the relative wealth of the inhabitants and above all
the great cheapness of food supplies. The spot where the city stands 361
has again, of course, been very cleverly selected from a strategic 487
and economic point of view, namely, just below the point from
which two broad-bottomed valleys, each containing an important
road, branch off to the north and south (2) from the larger Hsining
Ho Valley running from west to east. The mountains which enclose 133
these valleys are covered with loess and consist of the horizontal,
red sandstone and clay strata which we find today under loess in such
extensive areas of Northwest China, and which I have so often had
occasion to mention. These reddish mountains rise up as much as
300 and 400 meters above the valley floor and are hopelessly bare.
The summer rains are scarcely able to alter their faded color. Not
even a tree anywhere. Even the willows and poplars around the
villages are scarce. One very seldom sees large old trees anywhere
in Kansu; they were cut down and burned during the many rebellions
when the fetters of reason and right of ownership were loosened.

There is a great deal of rain in the region and many natural 631
springs. It is a little granery. Grain is sent from here to Lanchow 661
fu and many other places. The district also has a large untouched
store of minerals. It is counted among the good sinecures. The
best picture of its wealth is probably given by the annual income of the lowest civil mandarin, the Hsien, which amounts to between 20,000 and 30,000 taels (one tael is more than three marks, for the Hsining taels are very large). His regular income is, of course, as always in China, only 60 taels, the "rest" are perquisites. /173/ Taxes and - so it seems - lands which were formerly not surveyed but have now been reclaimed by the Chinese, and above all sentences in the many litigations make up the large sums.

2. The southern road leads to the Gum bum monastery and the city of Kue de ting; the northern one to Dai tung and farther toward Kanchow fu and the old Yümen, the gate toward Turkistan.

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T 122 pass through everywhere. By means of it even the road to Lhasa was open to me. But from the very first moment I was worried for fear my treasure, the passport, might be taken away from me, could be revoked or might even be a forgery.

I now urged our rapid departure and I set out as soon as I had received the notice that the military escort which the amban had promised at the time of the Chinese New Year would be sent after me to the border.

T 121 My task was now to finish the exploration of the Hwang Ho within the boundaries of Tibet and then to push on ever farther through unexplored territory, through the wide white spots on our maps of Tibet, to the southeast until I should be stopped by the Lhasa government or until I had reached the Valley of the Brahmaputra.

C 487 With this end in view I left Hsining fu and followed the most southerly of the three valleys which converge near the west gate of the city, upward, spending the first night in Schang bsin tschuan (meaning, roughly, "upper new town"), a small loess town with a bu tse or fort made of loam and a /261/ small garrison. Half the populace consist of Chinese, the other half are Tu fan, that is, Tibetan farmers, and it lies only a few kilometers south of the Gum bum monastery with which my readers became acquainted in Chapter Six. The loess ends here and this is also the end of the Chinese wagon road. From here one can travel on only with beasts of burden.

C 712 Just beyond this place, at sunrise the next morning, we passed by a low wall and small guard house containing a few ragged soldiers, and herewith we crossed the boundary of the land containing the most industrious farmers of our planet: the Middle Kingdom, and entered the kingdom of steppes and mountains. This is where Tibet begins.

C 487 Even directly beyond the little wall the land seemed uncultivated, wild and unclaimed. Soon we climbed steeply up a narrow rock ravine and often labored over slippery masses of ice which filled the entire valley floor like a glacier. Often men had to be sent ahead to cut steps into the ice for the animals and spread earth and sand. In spite of this, many of the animals fell, slid helplessly down the ice slopes on their knees, broke their saddles on the rocky crags and corners on either side of the valley, or had to be laboriously unloaded and re-loaded. Here, already, one of the yak bullocks fell with a wrenched shoulder and had to be

5: Tafel--446 T-3 (1905-1908) 1914 AJ1 Tibet AJ 1
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slaughtered. The little brook which runs through this valley ravine had, in the long winter months, prepared this obstacle for us. It had refused to let itself be bound by the winter's cold, but had, a violent fellow, again and again broken through the ice formations, flooded them, thickened them and piled them up until the result of its labors resembled a glacier. C 487

And yet by noon already my caravan climbed up the steep and narrow pass of the La tsche Mountains, the Lao ye Shan as the Chinese call it, at an altitude of over 3, 800 meters.

The mountain range which I herewith crossed is part of the long chain emerging at Koko Nor from the mountain masses which have been leveled off into a sort of high plateau and coming to an end in the Lan chow fu region among the pliocene clays and the loess of North China. Altogether I crossed this range at six different places. Like several other ranges which emerge from the northern part of the East Tibetan highland, it gradually decreases in height toward the east. Like all the other mountain ranges north of the 32° north latitude, it contradicts Richthofen's theory of a sharp drop in the Tibetan plateau, a Landstaffel, on the Chinese side. Below Hsün hoa ting Shan the chain of the Lao ye is broken through by the Hwang Ho. Farther up it forms the watershed between the Hsining River and the Hwang Ho. C 133 487

The path across this pass was poor. The animals gasped pitifully under their burdens and we made very little headway. Every few minutes the beasts would stop, panting for breath. Our progress was fitful.

For the first few days of our journey I had rented an additional three dozen mules or so; thus my eye fell upon an imposing file climbing up the steep slope. The caravan moved up toward the pass like a giant worm, winding its way laboriously, desperately twisting to the right and left, /262/ contracting and expanding, but nevertheless making headway and steadfastly striving toward its goal. Amid much shouting and the never-ending "aoaoao" of the Chinese drivers, we finally passed through a tight notch of a narrow ridge and arrived at the top, and from there we climbed down again on the south slope which was much steeper than the northern one, into a narrow rocky valley.

We passed near a Chinese wall (Ts'ien bu tsch'eng) in which a lieutenant with a small squad of men guards a frontier outpost. Soon after, we again saw a few fields, passed Tibetan farm houses, and saw Garang, the seat of a Tibetan prince of Ts'ien bu (rank). Long c [712] T 361 792

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Plate LXI

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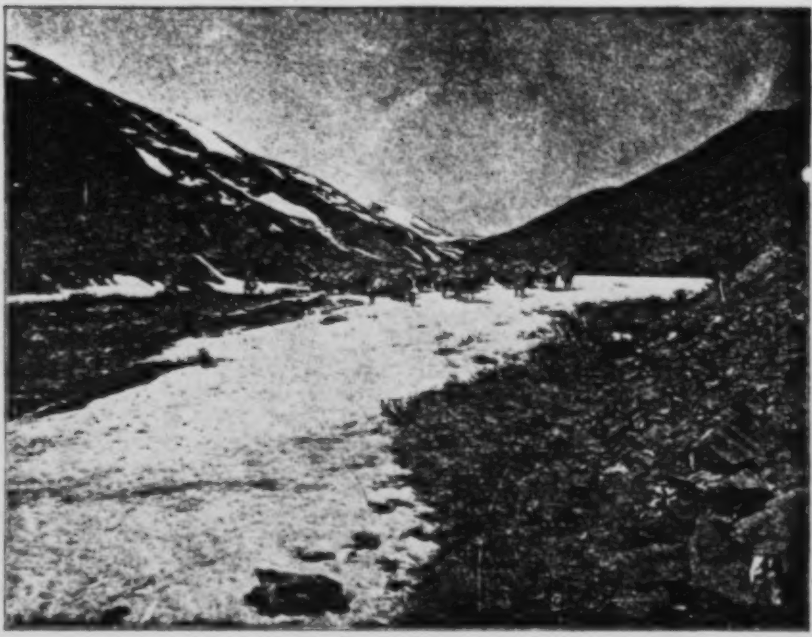
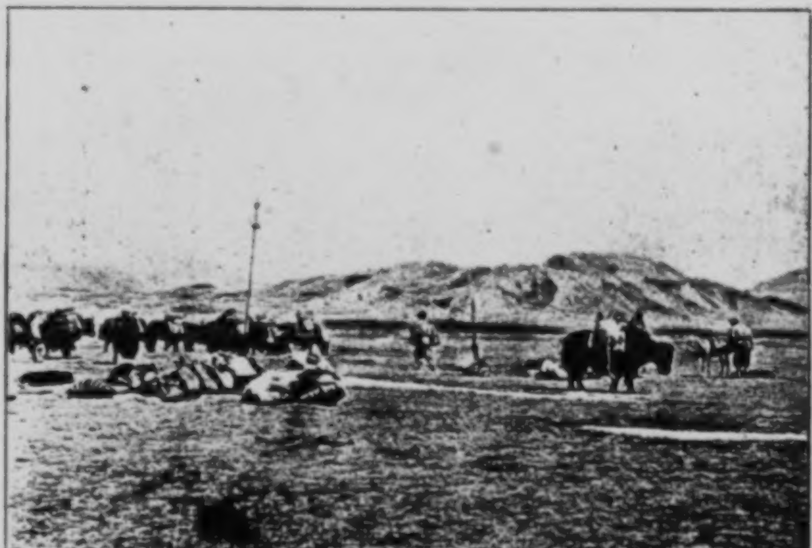


My caravan en route in the South Koko Nor Mountains.



Arrival at the new camp site.

/272A/

disappear without a trace if we had walked into the trap. 000

At eleven that evening we were in the inn at Kue de. The newly /278/ bought yaks had suffered considerably. They were all overtaxed and two of them were lame.

Thus the proposed journey from Kue de south through the territory of the Ts'aner and that of the Lutsang-Tibetans and on to the Aru Rardscha monastery and thence across the Hwang Ho, was not advisable. My yak-purchase, so frought with adventure, had convinced me that I could only have fought my way through in bloody combat. As a single European and with my few native companions I would have endangered the newly-equipped caravan The advantages did not seem worth the price. Besides, it was extremely doubtful whether the Tibetans would even permit me on the Aru Rardschan gomba ferry across the great river.

Thus I had no choice but to ride back the old way. On the next day I crossed over to the left bank of the Hwang Ho and at the southern foot of the Lao ye Shan at the Chinese military station of Ts'ien hu tsch'eng I gathered together my entire caravan. Meanwhile the large yak herd had been able to graze there undisturbed. During this time the animals had stored up a great deal of surplus energy.

As I mentioned earlier, the Chinese have guarded the Tibetan part [312]
of the road from Hsining fu to the oasis city of Kue de by means of two 487
military posts, Ts'ien hu tsch'eng and I ts'a sche. West and northwest of the former post there spreads out an uninhabited mountain region with peaks of 4,000-4,500 meters. Only on the south side of these mountains, that is, west of the station of I ts'a sche which I first visited there are pastures which are visited by nomads for certain periods. But from Ts'ien hu tsch'eng northwest into the mountains there extends a longitudinal fissure with old moraine remnants and along this leads a "caravan road" which, however, is seldom used because the region is regarded as unsafe and thus for long stretches there is not a trace of this "road." Nevertheless, it conveniently connects with Schara khoto, that important military station which had served me as a refuge after my defeat at Koko Nor the preceding January. In 1904 Lieutenant Filchner and I had also set out from there, and Prschewalski, Rockhill, Kozlov had already passed through there. After all that had happened, I finally had to make up my mind to go through the very same gate. The only consolation I had was that the road I used this time to reach the town, had not been traveled by any European before me.

It took us three days to get through the mountains between Ts'ien 000

133 bank of the river also; and the high terraces of red clays and sand which I mentioned earlier when I visited the oasis of Kue de, also belong to it. These terraces show that the plain formerly extended much farther. But the name "tala" refers only to the part on the left shore of the Hwang Ho, and is feared by all the people of the vicinity because of its scarcity of water and dryness. The tala soil consists of sand and rubble, and great stretches of its surface are covered with dunes which are often amazingly high. The Tibetans call it rdo tang, "stony plain," because of its many stones.

Here, too, the Hwang Ho is a most useless fellow. It has cut its bed so deep and thereby buried the level of the underground water so far down that no brook is permanently able to rise to the surface through the rubble and sand. We are confronted on these steppes with an ancient tertiary valley which was later buried. Geologically speaking, the Hwang Ho arrived late in this region and once it had turned into the valley, it could not free itself from it; moreover, it was forced to follow the old, buried rock channel toward the east and was not even able to clear out and restore the original shape of the valley. The stream's power of erosion has heretofore affected only the depths and has dug out a narrow canyon which the river races through in youthful exuberance.

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133 Four European expeditions had come within the vicinity of the tala before me. But all of them traveled along its edges and stayed on the important traffic routes along the foot of the mountain range in the north and south. These have gradually become wide, stony roads, through thousands of years of use. On the Filchner expedition we had, at my suggestion, tried to take a new route. But at that time we struggled unsuccessfully to find a route from Bayan Nor straight across the tala, and we were finally obliged to follow the main road which Rockhill and Grenard had taken before us. "You cannot go differently, there is no other way!" we had been told at that time. "It takes three long days to cross the tala, three days without water; the horses and oxen won't hold out that long." A year and a half later I happened to hear the ting of Dankar say that in 1905 on his trip into the Ngolok country he had come right through this desert, and therefore I would not let myself be frightened off when a new exclamation of "impossible!" reached my ears. Without making a lot of inquiries I traveled south from the Bayan Nor. Luck was with me on this new advance; we came upon a dried-out valley that did not wind too much and along the bottom of this our oxen made rapid progress, in spite of the many stones.

the broken teeth, which had been "given" me in January at the Koko Nor, had found the water. 000

On this day I lost two yaks that came from the Ts'aner. All the other animals reached the water hole, although some of them not until late that night. The two yak bullocks that were lost had had to be favored for a week already. They had taken turns carrying a skull of a Tibetan which I found between the dunes at the Si ni Ts'o. It was the lightest weight imaginable, but my men swore that it was this skull or rather the gui, the spirit of this dead man, that had exhausted the two animals and finally killed them. It weighed so heavily on their necks that they would have broken down even if they had been the strongest bulls, so my Mohammedans as well as my Buddhists solemnly declared.

In order to refresh my caravan to a certain extent I was forced to put in two more rest days at the water hole. One of those days was lost fetching the packs that had been left behind. I spent this time hunting in order to have some fresh meat. But there were not many living creatures to be found except the tschiang packs. I caught only a few hares and some prairie hens. The tschiang were extremely [136] cautious. They are very inquisitive animals, they always had to know what the mules and ponies were up to, but they never let me as a human being come closer than 400 meters. The flat terrain and the almost complete absence of vegetation made their vigilance easy.

On the afternoon of the second day our water hole dried up and we could not find another far and wide. The snow field, too, on the mountain beyond, which we aimed at from the distance, had now melted. We had obviously been lucky in crossing, and I did not fail to point out my good fortune to these superstitious people in the proper manner, in order to dispel any doubts that might still be left about the crane shot.

At the foot of the southern border range and parallel with it runs 487 a large yak road. This is a natural road running along for hours, straight as a die, and varying in width from six to ten meters, like a sheaf of little paths, /304/ sometimes close together, sometimes farther apart. This is a route used by wild game from time immemorial. Today it is the road of the Schar ba (the people from the east), that is, the merchants from Sung pan ting in Szechwan. Every year these people lead hundreds of bullocks carrying tea and all kinds of goods and trifles along this road in month-long journeys, and trade these things for wool, skins, furs, rhubarb and musk. We discovered this road on our next day's march and followed it in a southeasterly

[text continues on p.513]

C 487 T 361 619 direction. It brought us into a new, wide lateral valley that is situated beyond the sacred Amne Bayan and runs parallel to the principal range of the Semenov Mountains and the southern border of the tala steppe. Here we found a small stream beside which we pitched camp number 15. Farther southeast, in the distance, we could see the black tents of the Ats'o Lhardi Tibetans. We counted fifty tents. They looked like angular boulders, like mounds of termites against the still wintry, yellow prairie. We were still so far away from them that we could not establish communication. The entire tribe which carries on its own, independent marauding policy is said to have sixty families. Here, already, the Tibetans prefer to pitch their tents rather close together in order more easily to ward off attacks of other tribes.

C 133 The region in which the tents stood, the lower part of the lateral valley, is called "hoka" which is a Chinese designation consisting of ho, "the river," and ka (kou), "the mouth" of the river. In the Kue de dialect kou is always pronounced like ka. Here, again, there is an old Chinese castrum which has long since been abandoned; the direct road from Kabatalen across the tala to the south leads past it.

The new longitudinal valley which we had reached at camp number 15 is 50 - 60 kilometers long. It emerges from the chains of the Semenov Mountains at a sharp angle. Like all the other valley depressions in the region, its bottom is filled with masses of rock fragments and thus it is wide and forms a steppe. The hydrographic conditions of this mighty valley are extremely peculiar, for there is no brook running along the valley. Instead, the small streams that come down from the slopes and ravines, at various places break through the mountain range that separates the longitudinal valley from the valley plain. In this way various watersheds have been formed in the bottom of the longitudinal valley. These are so low that at first glance it seems incomprehensible why the flowing water has not made its way along the valley, especially since the bottoms of these watersheds are made up of rubble and sand which would offer little resistance, whereas the ridge of the mountain barrier which the brooks have evidently cut through consists of perpendicular, hard stone layers (permocarbon). Naturally, these abnormal rifts have not been made entirely by the present-day brooks. They have been caused by the filling-in and leveling of the longitudinal valley by the enormous, oft-mentioned rubble masses. The latter was so tremendous here that the valley floor was shoved up higher than

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5: Tafel--518 T-3 (1905-1908) 1914 AJ1 Tibet

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133 part of this mighty chain which I was now crossing with my caravan had been indicated on our maps as the Siansibel chain since the time of General Prschewalski's journeys. Up to now it was not clear whether this chain discovered by Prschewalski had any connection with the Semenov Mountains. Now as a matter of fact, in the eyes of the natives, Siansibel is only a pass which I myself crossed on the following day and which I discovered to be 3,800 meters high. The mountain range around the pass does not have any particular name for the natives, they give names to peaks and passes only. Thus, it is possible in Tibet to proceed after the fashion of recent Russian explorers and introduce foreign, if possible proper names for the individual ranges. These foreign names have the advantage of showing immediately that they are not local designations, but that they have been introduced by individual travelers in their explorations and in their effort to untangle the knotty problem of Tibetan Mountains. If, as our knowledge grows, we realize that the demarcation of individual mountains has been wrong, we have found that European designations of mountain ranges are easier to change than ostensibly local names.

487 485 712 Up on the top of the Siansibel Pass we came upon the large caravan road that leads from Bayan Nor and Kabatalen across the tala to the south and along which - as I now noticed for the first time - there stand loam fortresses every 25 - 30 kilometers, as a protection for travelers against nocturnal attacks. We continued to follow this road and set up Camp 17 within such a loam fortress. The loam walls had been erected probably half a century before by Chinese soldiers. Now they stood empty and partly in ruins but within them we felt infinitely relaxed and safe. I slept like a god between the three walls that still stood upright, in spite of snow and hail which were accompanied by an icy westwind.

133 316 The descent south from the Siansibel Pass is extremely gentle. Already at an altitude of 3,600 meters one leaves the Semenov Mountain range and thereupon has a wide view across a new steppe which slopes toward the southeast, and once more looks down on a longitudinal valley covered with rubble. A few brooks have put a bed 200 meters deep into this rubble, and far in the southeast a long, dark crevice with vertical walls stood out sharply against the pale yellow gleam of the steppe. "In that flows the Hwang Ho," my H'an said immediately. He had formerly often come through this region in search of gold and had even, on his way home, gone down the Hwang Ho on a raft. The river flows so deep down that one can see its waters only when one steps close to the edge of the fissure.

000 recovered. In my case it was only the dampness that was unpleasant, but my men were afraid of the evil spirit which was supposed to have brought us the disease.

June 6. My little fox terrier, Jack, was the one who was happiest when we traveled on. All he knew was travel. While I was sick and would not leave my tent in spite of all his invitations, he looked at me sadly and anxiously. He finally curled up on my blanket and lay motionless. But today when he saw me on my horse, he seemed transformed. Tirelessly he leapt up on the saddle with me and jumped down again. Then the little white /322/ beast ran about like a weasel, racing the dogs for hares and driving the marmots deep into their burrows. Our long delay had had the most salutary effect on the yak bullocks and the horses; they had grown so lively that it was very difficult to load them.

C 487 I had sent H'an ahead to find out how we should best travel on in the Tschürnong Valley. He returned with the worst possible report. He said that the ravine was much too steep and we would not be able to go much farther with the bullocks. He said the road was on the other side of the valley. The river had risen as a result of the monsoon rains and the difficulties and dangers of crossing were thus multiplied.

I left the Tschürnong Valley and continued up the lateral valley in which we had camped. After a few hours we crossed a moderately high pass and traveled northwest in a parallel ravine. On either side there rose magnificently-shaped mountains. At their foot were fresh green meadows, their peaks gleamed dazzlingly white. Wherever the ravine was a little wider we saw remnants of nomad encampments. There must have been countless numbers of people living here during the past winter. Now antilopes, marmots and hundreds of hares were the sole masters.

T 792 782 As before, I rode ahead of the caravan along with Da Tschang, spying out the road and pursuing my topographical and other surveys, when we noticed a few horsemen to the left of us on a narrow ridge. They were sharply silhouetted against the sky. Hardly had they spied us when they uttered a barbaric "Juchu!"

On the highest point of the ridge we could see a large pile of stones, a lab (r)tse. When they reached it, the riders slid from their horses, stuck their riding whips on which their horses' reins were fastened, into the ground as pickets, and in a trice had erected a small altar, and began fanning some embers which they had obviously

133 bottomless mud that covered everything. At each step the animals sank up to their hocks into the sandy-gravelly earth that was saturated with water. There was almost no vegetation. Here and there grew a few pulvinus plants, otherwise there was nothing but bare sand and angular stone fragments.

133 487 Once again we crossed the water-shed between the Hwang Ho and Central Asia which has no natural drainage. Devout travelers had marked the place with a large heap of stones and a lab (r)tse made entirely of white quartz fragments, crowned with huge wild yak skulls. Southeast of the pass - we could reach it simply by following a small valley - there was a large lake almost palpably near. It was the Tibetan Merduch' ts'o (1) (Khara Nor according to Roborowski). It seemed child's play to reach it on that same day, and from a distance a green shimmer promised ample food for the animals (Plate LXVII). But though to the eye the way seemed easy, it was very difficult actually to traverse. The entire descent down to the lake was a continuation of the same barren morass. Only on the narrow trails used by the kyang, the animals did not sink down to their bellies in mud. The aerial distance from the pass had measured 10 kilometers to the lake. But the caravan was obliged to make laborious detours. A few of the men were constantly occupied unloading animals that had got stuck, pulling them out and reloading them.

00 "Gung schi, gung schi! - we congratulate you, we congratulate you!" cried my men when, in the late afternoon, we encamped on solid, dry earth at Camp 31 which was, however, still far from the lake. "You have been very lucky, sir, the mountain spirits do not wish you ill, you have not lost a single animal!" We had, of course, proceeded cautiously and had always sent ahead scouts. The good mood lasted when, /324/ contrary to all expectation, we were able to brew hot tea in the camp. The sun had come out from behind thick clouds for only a few minutes but that had sufficed to prepare our fuel for us. The wild yak dung had dried astonishingly quickly as a result of the strong rays in this altitude. An added factor was the wide strip along the lake which showed a covering of grass. The water table which reached the surface farther up and on the mountain slopes, flowed underground here, even the brooks were buried in sand before they reached the lake.

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1. The Sidia Tibetans called it thus or Mergenduch' Ts'o.

000 menacing silhouette of the heavy, pointed horns of a yak bull. "In the name of Gung kang tschüs dyong!" whispered my companion, overcome with fright, "the mountain spirit in person!" The old fellow seemed to regard himself as such as he stood there motionless, his narrow front turned toward me, and staring at me. For a long time he considered whether he should let himself be driven away from his precious, cool resting place by the stones I threw at him, or whether he should drive me away. The wild yaks prefer to rest on the windiest slopes and passes. Farther away in the uninhabited mountain wastes one seldom climbs a height /23/ without encountering at the top an old bull. It is almost as though the animals longed to return to their vanished glacial home; one finds them on the most barren peaks, lying in the snow as though they were dreaming. The Tibetans, however, say that these solitary philosophers lost their mothers when they were very young and that is the reason they have become hermits.

487 I was fortunate in my impromptu choice of the crossing (1) into the Yangtze basin. In the very direction in which I intended to travel on, a circuitous valley led downward. It gradually increased in size. I followed it throughout the rest of August. Every day my sorely-tried animals found sufficient pasturage and the marches also continued without serious difficulties.

We even found traces of human beings after we had passed through a zone of sand dunes in the upper part of the valley. This had a soothing effect on my anxious caravan. Their confidence rose that I would succeed, even without a guide, to lead my small band out of this labyrinth of mountains and valleys to their destination. "Sang tsche" (altars) on which the wild yaks occasionally tested their horns, old cooking sites (the familiar three stones) appeared by the wayside, if they were not concealed by the flowers and herbs that grew more abundantly here. Perhaps formerly this route was used more often. It seems to lead from the region of the Tossun Nor to the Tang La and

000 finally to Lhasa. The great number of stone slabs that were covered

1. On our maps the Bayan kara mountain range is in this region. Strictly speaking, the Mongols use this name for only one pass on the way to Lhasa. The Chinese geographers, however, have long since used it, or rather "Ba yen ka la Shan" for the long chain which forms the water shed between the Hwang Ho on the one side and the Yangtze Kiang and the Min Kiang on the other.

000 100 meters, and whatever might be hiding farther beyond in the ravines could not be distinguished.

That night we slept on the rise above the tents, in a semi-circle with our rifles in our hands. What could it be? What drove the dogs again and again like mad out into the black night? And that in spite of the rain that already before midnight began beating down on us and finally turned to snow!

"Tsche li bu gan tsing" (It's not safe here") everybody said in the morning. "Ghosts live here and tease people." - "The dead have been exposed near here," was the way Tsch'eng speculated further. Everyone was glad to get away quickly.

Just beyond the campsite I left the Yangtze Valley by way of a low but snow-covered pass, because steep rocks impeded the further journey on this side. North of the first chain of mountains, parallel with the river valley there stretched an absolutely straight longitudinal furrow between snow-covered peaks. In this lay a high pass, barren and inhospitable. Only a five-meter square wall-like obo that had a few stone slabs with prayers carved into them and was crowned with a pair of yak skulls reminded us that before us other people had found it necessary to set up camp in this frosty and windy place.

487 From this pass I descended into the broad transverse valley of the river Tschü Chu Mar (red water), which had broken through my huge, straight longitudinal furrow, making a deep ditch. For some time I was obliged to ride on in an icy storm cloud that was filled with something resembling hail. I pressed on in the blinding storm as though in a hood of mist and thus got almost into the middle of a tremendous herd of wild yak. The hail ceased as quickly as it began. I /32/ attempted to count the herd and had reached 3,400 when the black masses pressed so close together that I had to give up. It was a veritable army that now crossed the river before my eyes. The crack of my rifle with which I got myself a victim, had at first instilled panic in the animals, but soon they quieted down. The animals at my left had to swim across the deep river just where they had reached it, but the others who had succeeded in turning up-stream were soon seen to halt in well-ordered ranks and cautiously send out bulls as scouts who selected the best places to cross before the main body, one troops after another, ventured on the insecure slimy bottom. On the next day when I myself was looking for a favorable crossing-place for my caravan, I realized how accurately the bulls had found the best place. The Yüchü Tibetans had told me about this crossing-place and had called it "Tschü Mar rab wden" which means "the seven fords across the red

water" (Plate LXX of Volume I (1)). As a matter of fact, I had to cross seven larger river branches here. It was obvious that only a few days before the water level had been much higher. In all the rivers of High Tibet the amount of water changes very much during the summer months. When I crossed, only the goats and the dogs had to swim, as had the wild yak cows the day before. They were all carried far downstream. The chief difficulty for the pack animals was to find a way through the mud banks that protruded between the individual branches.

On the other side of the ford I decided to travel along the continuation of the broad and at the same time dry longitudinal furrow by which I had come, and go in a west-northwest direction in order
000 to put a greater distance between us and the Yüchü. (2) No human being is more easily turned into a robber by favorable circumstances than a Tibetan. During today's consultation Tschaschi confessed that he, too, like the other Kue de Tibetans with whom he made the return journey from a pilgrimage to Lhasa (3) had turned back at the Dang la pass in order to steal a few yak and ponies at night in Nag

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1. The Tibetans say that the Chu Mar (red river) together with the schDschre-rtschyang-tschü (yak cow and wild ass river) forms the schDschre tschü (yak cow river). The latter is the common Tibetan name for the Yangtze Kiang. It is usually written De tschü or Dre tschü. The name probably stems from hbri mo (yak cow) which I heard pronounced "mdsche" or "schdschre."

2. I was not absolutely sure where I was. Because of its size I regarded the Chu Mar for a long time as the Yangtze Kiang itself. Our best maps failed us here completely.

3. In all of northern Tibet, among the Banag kaksum of the Koko Nor region as well as in Amdo, "Lhasa" is not pronounced like the usual "l" followed by "h", but like the English "th" followed by an extra "h". The word is familiarly derived from Lha meaning god and sa meaning earth, place.

000 to our hips. (1) We marched the whole day and when darkness came we were only on the other side of the plain where giant sand barchan blocked our path. Here we made camp, dead-tired from the unaccustomed marching and the heavy burdens. Meanwhile dark clouds gathered in the west and soon a Tibetan thunderstorm with hailstones as large as peas struck our exposed little band with elemental force. Thereafter it poured all night long. Our covers consisted only of a thin piece of felt and we lay on a fur, and this whether it was raining or snowing. Far into the night we saw the numerous campfires of the robber band, at the place where the attack had been.

487 On the next day we inadvertantly came upon unusually distinct and wide road tracks and soon after we found numerous old cooking pits, a camp site, around which stone altars stood on hills. We had struck the Goba road which here, north of the Kuku schili Mountains (in which, /43/ therefore, the surprise attack had taken place) runs in a northeast - southwest direction toward its great goal, Lhasa. Then I knew for certain that the high chain of snowy peaks to my north belonged to the Marco Polo Mountains, that is, that it was the eastern part of the so-called Arka tagh or "rear mountain range" that became more familiar to us through the Swede Hedin.

080 We still had a great deal of courage. Inasmuch as the range of peaks of the Marco Polo Mountains in the north appeared to have deep saddle-like passes, we soon left the Goba road in order to find a direct road north to the Tädschinär-Mongols. I struck out in this direction all the more confidently because on all my maps, even the one taken out of the Stieler atlas, a valley-cut through the mountains was indicated, albeit with a dotted line, showing that it was uncertain.

On the second day walking became even more burdensome. We also felt the unpleasant effects of the thin air, which had never bothered us much when we rode. Most of my men complained of dizziness and headaches. For some of them the mountain sickness began with vomiting and I myself once collapsed, unconscious. The few things that my men had selected from among the trade articles which we could not take with us, were thrown away like ballast from

1. It was the upper part of the river which we had crossed the week before the attack. In the meantime it had become amazingly small. It was only now that I noticed thi was not the Yangtze Kiang, but the Napchitai ulan muren of the Tsaidam-Mongols and the Tibetan Chu Mar.

000 Turning off suddenly we then sought the protection of a lateral valley, one to two kilometers from the road. Meanwhile it has grown pitch-dark. The horses are tethered and graze throughout the night, as far as the length of their rope permits. They stop for only brief half hours to lie down to sleep. We always looked for a spot for them that had the best possible grass and, if at all possible, was sheltered from the strong west-wind. When we were ready to lie down our hands and feet were stiff from cold and we curled up like worms in order to keep the last bit of warmth from escaping. At this time the thermometer goes down to -16°, and once on a pass it dropped to -20°, and the west-wind never seemed to stop. The last shirts we were able to rescue were long since in shreds, our trousers consisted only of traces. In fact, like three Ngolok, in grimy, dishevelled furs and with sheep boots and no stockings we rode for three days along the Blue Sea, the Ts'o ngombo. /80/

•487 Our road consisted of an old well-worn yak path. It led from the Dabassu depression over a pass 3,750 meters high in the south Koko Nor Mountains, and then straight on, only one or two kilometers from the shore of the lake toward the Chinese border market Dankar.

133 The shores of the large inland sea are flat and sandy in the south. There are no projecting rocks. It is a broad flat valley filled with water, exactly like the neighboring tala was (to judge from the shell remains) before the Hwang Ho drained it in the east. The lake is probably at no point more than 100 meters deep.

There are many small brooks flowing into it. The Tibetans can count 108, as many as there are beads in their rosaries. All of them already had thick crusts of ice and therefore caused us difficulty. Many of them have deltas extending into the lake and form small lagoons. In the northwest is the largest tributary, the Bukhain Gol, which with its sediment has formed a peninsula extending 25 kilometers into the oval of the lake. From a great distance, from the heights of the south Koko Nor Mountain range, the discoloration of the water in front of this peninsula makes one realize that there is extensive shallowness.

Twenty-two kilometers from the southern shore the sacred island dances like a skiff on the blue restless waves of the Ts'o ning (1).

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1. Mongolian: Kuisu (navel), or according to Meng gu yu mu dyi: Khuisun tolkhā. The Dankar Chinese call this island Hai sin Shan and say it is a mountain in the heart of the lake.

city. He afterwards confessed that he never expected to see me again. 000 My new undertaking seemed too risky to him. Above all, he felt that I had taken along too few people. I, too, was convinced that we were too weak, but my financial condition was to blame for that. The first C 487 night we stayed in Tschen hai pu and on the second day of our journey we reached Dankar. On the next stage I covered the 70 li up to Schara khoto. I had decided to take the road traveled by K'am traders as far as the Hwang Ho and the Ngolok country. I had traveled this road with Filchner in 1904, but at that time we did not know that this was a much-frequented way. It is the easiest route and the one on which it is possible to make the most headway.

On January 23 we camped in the middle of the Remo Yung (Mongolian: Ara Gol), a few kilometers from the ruins of Tsaghan tsch'eng; and on the following day we rode past the Bayan Nor and the South Koko Nor Mountains and at dusk reached the peasant colony of Tschabtscha. The weather in the highlands was clear and beautiful every day. There were only a few individual cumulus clouds that swept past us and over the dry, barren tala steppe that is visible south of Tschabtscha. At noon in protected spots the temperature went up to zero, and once it even went to +2°; at night it cooled off to -26° and once it even went to -31°. It was bitter cold, for the wind never seemed to die down and it cut to the bone.

Although Tschabtscha lies at an altitude of 2,990-3,040 meters, C T 361 a permanent village settlement has developed here and from year to year more and more Amdo-Chinese and Tibetans come here, among them many who have been guilty of some kind of mischief elsewhere. In answer to my question I was told that 250 families live in the scattered settlement. Most of them have come within the last ten years. Originally the land belonged to a Mongolian gung (duke) who T C 241 today is in the Tsungkuk Valley near Gomba soma. Barley, oats, buckwheat, flax, even potatoes and some wheat are grown here. Three favorable months make this possible in spite of the northern latitude and the great altitude. One of the chief factors is the sunny, southerly position of the valley pocket. The village nestles in the declivity of the South Koko Nor Mountains between /100/ a few low foothills, and is protected from storms. Another factor is the loess that is quite thick here and was piled up because the South Koko Nor Mountains formed protected nooks into which the dust that was blown here from afar could settle. Finally, not the least important factor is the Tschabtscha tschü, a lively brook, that comes down from the mountains and can be utilized for irrigation of the fields, so that close

000 his knowledge of the Tibetan language was very modest, but his position made it necessary for me to pay heed to his "face." He was always addressed as "mister" and was given a servant; he rode my best ambler and was given 10 taels a month - more than he had ever earned before - besides free board.

T 360 With these people and my costly caravan I again found myself in the environs of the Tschebtsa' Fan tse. But we saw them only at a distance in the shape of black tents and black dots. The winter camps of this tribe lie in the gorges of the South Koko Nor Mountains. On the southern slopes they and their herds are protected C 487 only from storms. When at half past seven in the morning we left the Huyu Yung Tschü the temperature was /102/ -22°. The river was 20 meters wide and smooth as glass. We threw a few shovels full of sand on its surface and crossed it close to our place of encampment. However, by the time we were across the west wind had not left much of our sand; in spite of all precautions several mules fell down and the wind increased from minute to minute. We made straight for the Gungga Nor which is let in between steep sand masses, exactly like the Si ni Ts'o and is connected with the Huyu Yung Valley by a broad lowland, although it does not drain openly toward this river. Its waters are sweet. I kept to the east of the lake where there is no path, but I could not follow the shoreline because the masses of broken stones and sand of the tala or rdo tang form too sharp an incline toward the slippery ice surface. Soon we had to climb up the tala itself. And on top we were met by the west wind which had turned into a raging storm. It shook and tossed us poor riders as though titans were trying to lift us from the saddle. From 10 o'clock on the air was so thick with dust and sand that we could hardly see, and we had to huddle close together so that we did not lose one another. We should have lost our direction in the pathless desert, devoid of vegetation, if I had not constantly kept the compass in my hand. The animals did not walk, they fought their way forward with each step.

000 At three o'clock we finally found a dry gap in the ground where we had some shelter. We could no longer battle the wind and were safe between the high dunes. I discovered that the wind velocity here measured almost 33 meters a second.

After the animals were unloaded they huddled close together. With their rear end turned toward the wind, they sadly hung their heads. They were not unsaddled any more because of the cold. In this respect we followed the custom of the country. We humans drew our fur coats over our heads in order to protect ourselves from the way they are written, that /128/ even the most scholarly lamas are uncertain about orthography their life long. T 212

Besides this ten-year-old, the be hu had two other sons, the eighteen-year-old who had taken part in the journey to Dankar and was the future candidate for the rank of chieftain, and a slightly older son who was in a monastery in the Yangtze Valley, as an incarnation. Since, according to Tibetan law, the second son had now reached his majority, his father had already selected a wife for him. The pretty daughter of the chieftain of the Anirba tribe from the Dsa Chu Valley was to be taken into the family in a few weeks. The be hu hoped to win a valuable coalition with this union and thus be able to exert counter-pressure on the obtrusive, impudent superiority of the Dergi. T 521

February 21. This morning the temperature in the valley was -10° C and there was a 10 centimeter layer of new snow. We left Tendo at 10 o'clock. My plan was first to visit Lab gomba, then go by way of Dscherku, the chief town of the region, on south until I met with serious opposition and would be forced to stop. The road to the Lab, Labe, or Labeg monastery led over the mountain and pass called Nien ge la. The pass is not very deeply cut into the mountain chain which separates the (ndu) Tendo Valley from the La (be) Valley, and is 4,650 meters high. In the snowstorm we came through the Dergi village above Tendo unexpectedly and therefore also unimpeded and beyond this the way became ever steeper and led straight up to the pass. I had been given two Tendo men as guides. They marched sturdily at the head of the train and seemed to know no exhaustion nor to have any difficulty in breathing, whereas my Chinese could not be persuaded to dismount, but on the contrary and to my chagrin, clung to their panting animals like bags of meal, even when the beasts slipped on the slope which pitched like a roof or slid down on their knees. Moreover, the west wind was so strong on the height that I chose not to ride for fear of freezing my toes. Near the pass we were overtaken by a messenger who brought the good news that the Tendo chieftain had just been presented with a fourth son. At the pass I gave the messenger a khadar and a piece of silk as a birthday present, and then he hurried on to Lab gomba in order to notify a priest and fetch him, so that he might give the child a lucky name. C 487

From accounts of the two Tschang I knew that in K'am uncounted precipitous crossings awaited me; but no one had told me that as Chinese they intended to ride over all these passes. I was therefore doubly anxious because of the mountains and the loss of animals they would cause me. The men I had with me this time were utterly 000

T 609 in Tombu mda. So when twilight fell no one thought anything of it when we pitched our tents. The neighbors as well as our host were glad to bring more fodder straw. Their wives and daughters helped prepare and eat supper and stayed on for a long time by the flickering fire, joking and singing.

During the night there was a heavy fall of wet snow. For this reason we all slept inside the tents and kept only the dogs outside as watches. It was shortly after midnight when they suddenly began to bark just outside my tent. Even my hoarse old Tschimo joined in which she did only when there was something really annoying in the vicinity. We therefore all ran in the direction of her half-muffled voice, out into the cold night with our guns and drawn swords. There was no one to be seen. But in the snow there were footprints that led from a fresh break in the outer wall on the valley side, straight up to my horses and back again. Pieces of meat lay strewn about, which were meant for the dogs and beside the broken wall we picked up a fur coat into which my black néh'ere had sunk his teeth. Outside the wall there were more footprints that led along the outside of the village.

In the morning when we broke up camp a fresh snowfall had covered all tracks, and our hosts were as affable as they were the day before. The mule was sent to its buyer after I had followed the custom of the country and plucked a few hairs out of its mane. Then all the neighbors and their wives helped tie up the packs and after a cordial farewell, amid the merriest farewell greetings of the women and unmarried girls, we entered the village street, passed the house-fortress and went up the southern one of the two ravines above whose juncture the village of Tombu mda with its 60 families had been built. We had gone about a half hour when we met two young men in the woods who were waiting for Tung sche and begged him to induce us to return the fur coat. They promised him a rupie for this service. I then learned for the first time that the trophy had been packed by my Dungani among their things and taken along. The two men had the eyes of rogues and had the impudence to approach us with a burning matchlock. They lied to us that the thieves were young men from the neighborhood who only wanted to have some fun and scare us.

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● 487 According to my calculations Tombu mda lies at an altitude of 3,805 meters (Dutreuil de Rhins-Grenard: 3,934 meters), but a few kilometers to the south the path again goes up to 4,535 meters (Dutreuil-Grenard there reached a pass that even went up to 5,000
000 meters). As we went on, the sky again rapidly clouded over after the sun had shone earlier; the prevailing west wind of the extreme heights

could no longer win over the lower current from the east, so that we ran into a thick sea of fog in which we could only with difficulty find our way. This occurred before we reached the first of the two passes that lead over to Dscherku. Added to that, there was almost a foot of snow which covered all the naka and nadung holes and pools of the mountains and which once more exhausted us. The pack animals fell constantly, had to be pulled up /138/ and repacked. One of the mules developed a heart weakness, staggered at first as though it were drunk or afflicted with the mountain sickness, and fell again and again after I had long since removed its load. It was the first victim of this winter journey. Its hour struck just before the caravan reached its first stopping place. It had formerly been such a playful creature who, of all the long-ears, could best kick with its hind legs. Now we had to leave it all by itself in order to rescue the others and ourselves from this hostile world. The poor animal stood upright, as though rooted to the spot and seemingly turned to stone, on that slope. We left it an old felt cover - when may a Tibetan passer-by have removed it from the animal? With great effort we turned the stiff animal so that the wind struck it from behind, then heartless humans that we were, we drove the others on into the driving storm and the fog. (1) 000

1. Two days later when I sent someone out to look for the animal, the felt blanket had been removed and the animal was dead. As proof, its long gray ears were laid before me.

The broad, gentle, rounded form of the mountain that we met high up made it even more difficult to orientate ourselves in the midst of clouds and whirling snow. If it had not been for the deep snow we might have thought that we had been transported back to the Tschang tang, so gentle were the slopes, so basin-shaped the valleys, so slight the ridges which were notched by passes, so seldom was primary rock visible in the masses of loose detritus. On a later visit to these mountains I noticed a few isolated slabs of rock that showed scratches and looked as though they had been transported for a more or less great distance through last year's snow or ice. The last moraines seem to have gone somewhat below 4,000 meters. Now, however, there is no spot far and wide where the snow lasts over a period of years, although some points reach over 5,000 meters. 133

After we had crossed a small longitudinal valley up there, which followed the direction of the stratification toward the southeast, we 481

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487 had to cross a second pass, not much lower than the first. Shortly before that we passed through a small zone of limestone forming a chain of small cliffs, as they were so often to be found on the upper Hwang Ho and the Schoga Gol.

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133 Whereas the Yangtze Valley and its nearest lateral ravines had pointed V-formations and typical aspects showing that they could only have been cut out by flowing water, this mountain again had only flat slopes and the valleys and ravines ended in wide hollows. Small moors and moraines lay in bulging masses on the slabs of sandstone and slate that were still steep, in fact almost vertical and made up the central mass of the mountain range.

At last the storm tore asunder the blanket of cloud around us. The tangled chaos of rocks which I had gazed at and marveled at even north of the Yangtze Kiang, stretched farther and farther to the south and southwest. There were peaks upon peaks and chains upon chains, but nowhere was there a human habitation to be seen. From the pass the way led down to the south between bare rubble slopes, along a little brook. Where the ground had thawed in the sun and there was no snow we were hemmed in by deep swamps. However, we finally again reached the thick plant covering; soon thereafter we found two black tents and grazing yaks. Two large valleys coming from the south and the west, converged in front of us. We turn a sharp corner and are suddenly in the midst of the houses of Dscherku ndo.

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CHAPTER XIV

Northern K'am

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609 My reception in Dscherku ndo was more friendly than anywhere else in Tibet. All the inhabitants of the village, countless women, girls and children crowded around us, around my interpreter Tschang and around the big Tschang, and a joyous "Odyi, odyi!" came from a hundred lips. And those who did not cry "welcome" stuck out their tongues as far as they could, grinning in between. A strange man with a friendly face took the bridle of my horse and led me in front of a house that was prepared for us when news was received of our coming. Everybody laughed and greeted the people from Hsining. Hundreds of hands busily helped unload the packs and carry them into the house, so that there was nothing for my Chinese to do. They

there at the entrance to a large lateral valley; they belong to the ferrymen. On the bank itself there were walls four and five feet thick and half again as high as a man. Every single free stone of these walls was a half yak-load of Chinese tea which, pressed and sewn into black yak skins, was waiting to be transported to Central Tibet. In the next few days 800 oxen were supposed to come and take them into the interior along the route I had just come. 491

From the ferrymen I learned that along the lively little stream Tscho Chu which is eight meters wide and one meter across and has its mouth near Tschomdo, there is a road to Tsiamdo by means of which one can go through the free kingdom /166/ of Lhado in eight days and reach the town of Tsiamdo and the large Batang-Lhari-Lhasa road. Foolishly enough, I told my men that same evening of my intention to follow this road south. The next morning Yin lu tse and Ma "Thirty-six" had disappeared, never to return. Yin lu tse had struck up a great friendship with Tschang tung sche and "Thirty-six" had left behind in Dscherku ndo a girl with whom he was seriously in love. Thus it was perhaps only a coincidence that they escaped this particular night. I now noticed that every day one of them had come to me with a request for a larger advance. Both of them also asked me to give them guns for the night because there were robbers in the vicinity. But since I kept the guns inside my tent and, as usual, had locked the horses' chains and kept the key in my pocket, even when I am asleep, I did not lose so very much. But a gold and silver tauschiert sword decorated with carnelian, that I had bought in Dscherku ndo from a Gerdschi chieftain, was gone. The two Dungani that had been left behind, Hai and So, were loudest in their accusations against the fugitives. "They took along our only kosher cooking pot," they complained in despair, "and on top of it the kosher traveling provisions for the next fortnight." "Just yesterday 'Thirty-six' took a whole month's salary from me, in order to buy himself some silver earrings," Li added in his deep bass. Meanwhile Da Tschang crept secretly into my tent and explained: "Just yesterday 'Thirty-six' asked me to give him the only shirt I possess; by God, it was worth 2 taels in Hsining. If I buy a new one here it will cost me 10 rupees. If you want me to go on with you and not turn back to Dscherku ndo in order to fetch my shirt, then please pay me the 10 rupees for the damage which your servants did to me." He never for a moment forgot his part and always knew how to derive profit from a situation. He was the only one of the remaining four men who spoke Tibetan reasonably fluently and he was the only one who understood the South Tibetan dialects. 487 000

T 392 361 T 342 old roamed around the houses and tents in which, besides the monks, there were also a few old and sick people living. South of the monastery is the rgensa, the winter abode of the Läwa nomads. However, in summer the winter houses of this tribe are not recognizable as houses. All the wood that is needed for the roof or the walls in building, is buried in the earth in spring, so that strangers cannot use it as firewood. Here wood for building is already considered precious for it must be dragged a three days' journey into this region which is poor in wood, and besides that it must be bought from the neighboring tribe. (1)

1. I once also saw the winter houses in the territory of the Tschirchama tribe. There, too, all the wooden parts were buried in the ground during the summer. But the houses had stone socles one-half to one meter high, which almost looked like the walls of an ancient city that had been destroyed. W. Filchner erroneously called them a fortress. It was only a rgensa, the Shdyaru rgensa. He was also somewhat mistaken about the forms as they are pictured on p. 390 of the book: Rätsel des Ma Chu. Regular forms never occur.

T 501 Rao gomba, not very famous as a sanctuary, is important because of its ferry across the Me Chu. A few steps from the scattered houses of the monks lies a well-built ferry boat constructed in the well-known box shape of North China and the Hwang Ho boatmen. We made use of this on September 2, after I had stored all dispensible objects, all my chests, in the house of a priest. Under the guidance of an old Läwa Tibetan who looked as emanciated as a C 487 133 mummy, I went south with only the tsung ye, one of the Tschang La guides, Brdyal and Tschemotscho (Plate LXIX). Our horses pulled the box boat across the Me Chu, and were obliged to swim the entire width of the river. The water is almost stagnant. On the other side we quickly saddled our horses and without much ado or many detours our guide led us across a swamp two kilometers wide, on the northern shore of which live the Gedu nomads and on the southern, the Chamä. Later we went for 7 kilometers straight as a die through hilly country to the south; a little farther to the west lay the original monastery of the Chamä. The only tall growth consisted of rhubarb bushes with blossom stalks three meters high. They belong to a species that looks like the rheum tanguticum. The bulbs are seldom

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dug out here because there is no possibility of drying them without having the sun reach them. Isolated high rows of dunes overgrown with grass stood close beside bottomless swamps. They testify to the winter condition of the region when one dust column after another whirls across the ice-covered surfaces. In the afternoon the old man led us through the Botsong Chu, a swamp lake three kilometers wide and to me unknown, but in any case of very great length. Large patches of it consisted of completely open water and in between were reeds, sedge grasses and floating water plants. The air was +9. 5°, but in spite of this the temperature of the water was /Plate LXVII, (sections 1, 2, 3, and 4) appears between pp. 289 and 290 in the original text. / /290/ +14. 5°, as a result of the strong radiation on the flat basin. Thus, it did not seem at all uncomfortable that before we entered the lake we had, at the advice of our guide, tied all our important belongings, instruments, fire implements, etc., into our trousers and wound the latter around our heads and then, with the exception of this head covering, entered the water as God made us, pulling our horses along or, in very deep places, letting ourselves be drawn by the horses' tails. Evening saw us happy, albeit with some teeth-chattering, near the tents of the Chamä kadya where we lay down to sleep. Here the black tents always stood in groups of about a dozen forming a large circle into which at night the many sheep and the less numerous yaks were driven (Plate LXV).

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The night temperature had been +3° and a ride south of only 20 kilometers (aerial distance) brought us the next morning to So tsong gomba, the monastery of the Tangsker Tibetans. Close beside the scattered houses of the monastery flowed the Hwang Ho.

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It was the first radiantly beautiful day. In the morning for some time thick veils of fog had covered the hills. But when we rounded the last corner the mysterious stream lay open before us. I trembled with joy and excitement over the mighty panorama, which to see had cost me so many new efforts, but which I could now enjoy and absorb to the fullest extent.

In gigantic curves the muddy and here already yellowish-gray waves of the "Yellow River," sunk in alluvions, came toward us from some distant mountain range far to the southwest (at 250° according to the magnetic needle), only to take on quite suddenly now the direction followed by a broad tributary coming from the south-southeast and, together with the clear waters of this stream, to turn toward the northwest.

Just at the crown of the turn lies the monastery So tsong gomba

C 133 channel not very deep, although the rocks are not hard and offer little resistance. The configuration of the Hwang Ho in its upper part from its source to the bend and at the Tibetan bend itself gives the appearance as though, at the time of extensive glaciers in Tibet or during the period of large accumulations of erratic boulders and the formation of gravel, the waters had not flowed north, but south, toward Szechwan. The uppermost part of the Ma Chu-Hwang Ho looks like a part of the Yangtze Kiang. But one wonders what the drainage was like on this part of the earth's surface before the gravel and clay masses were stratified and embedded in the valleys. The old Hwang Ho probably drained only the Koko Nor territory and then flowed rather directly into the channel of the Wei Ho and into the region of Hsining fu which was already in existence before that. The upper part of the present-day Ma Chu-Hwang Ho, from its source up to the present-day Tibetan bend, may even at that time have been a tributary of the Yangtze Kiang. The deposit of masses of gravel on the eastern edge of Tibet is, to be sure, so tremendous that this assertion can be made only with the greatest caution, for our knowledge of these regions suffices for only an inadequate summary of present-day geographical conditions.

000 I rested another whole day near Rao gomba in order to care for my horses. There were still five of them very lame as a result of the many swamp holes and ditches, and all of them needed rest very badly. Wang Tsung ye stamped his foot like a child when in the morning I gave the order not to saddle the animals but to drive them to pasture. But my good angel did not cause me to change my mind in spite of the young man's curses; it was probably also he who caused the many lame horses in the first place. But we were not aware of its guardianship until the next day.

C 487 The road from Rao gomba to Tao tschou led due north for an entire day's ride as far as Lhamo se and from there three full days in a northeasterly direction. At first one crosses a swampy valley country 15 kilometers wide, the plain of the Me Chu which, however, soon turns its large curves in a westerly direction. Then one follows the nDam Chu, a tributary of the Me Chu upstream. After one has crossed it at the rDo ro ford - the little river was there 18 meters wide and 1.3 meters deep and the ford is stony, as its name implies - one T [619] reaches the plain of Nima long or Nima rung. This region belongs to the 12-Bu tribe of Radang with not quite 200 families. It is excellent pasture land, very seldom do low waves of hills rise out of its C 133 swampy surface. /296/ The Obo-kopje is like a landmark behind us

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We rode past the east end of the Mou Ts'o, a beautiful blue body of water that extends 3 kilometers toward the northwest. Near its western end I could see the smoke of the Mou (Muru) tents. In the north-northwestern part of the Mou Ts'o are the winter houses of the Mou tribe and not too far from them Gamo rgendya, the tribal monastery. Beyond the Mou Ts'o and its swamp which caused us two tumbles, we went along a valley of meadows into the chalk mountains. Just before that we crossed the large Sung pan road which we had left on August 30 near the Dah' rgenggo Plain and which had since then avoided the large swamps of Re- and Me Chu which I had sought out, and constantly followed the southern slope of the chalk range. It continues in the same northwesterly direction. From the Mou country it leads into the Lharde country and to the monastery of Tschaga wechi. Beyond the Lharde country one gradually reaches the abodes of the Mongols which I mentioned earlier, first of all those of the Wäse. (1)

1. The most important Mongolian districts in this region are the following: rDiasa, Toro, Wäse, Sertsching, Tso ch'o, Ari, Gadspima.

At half past one we were on a saddle of the chalk mountains which here has a strike of N 78° W, at an altitude of 3,705 meters. From there one could see the well-worn road to Lhamo gomba. After it crosses two smaller ravines which turned west to the Hwang Ho, it leads across a second saddle of 3,635 meters which forms the water shed between the Hwang Ho and a river of Täwo Kiang ts'a. The chalk mountains formed a high plateau beside the swamp land and its limestone islands.

000 As we neared the first pass, a high point beside it came to /298/ life. Horses were being driven behind a slope and we discovered a few naked human beings. As we rode on they called to us. In answer to their rough: "Arro! Stop! Who are you? Where do you come from? Where are you going?", Tschemotscho reassured them: "We are Somo men and are accompanying a huo fo ye to Labrang." It was a side-detachment from Radang which considered their enemies capable of the tactics of enveloping them and falling on their flanks. Because no Chinese appeared, the warriors had taken off their clothes for the time being and were taking a sun bath. While we were being cross-examined, the poor tsung ye trembled for me and the whole afternoon he could not calm down. He now beat the pack horses with

all his might. But darkness was beginning to fall when we reached the valley at the bottom of which lies the sleepy monastery of Lhamo gomba. The beautiful weather was over again, rain and snow had begun to fall and lasted half the night. 000

September 7. From our camp it was only 2 kilometers to the houses of the monastery which lies at an altitude of 3,375 meters. At first I reached a few dozen lay houses built of wood that stand on the edge of the brook like Swiss hay barns, and there I discovered that the large Lhamo se is made up of two separate monasteries known as Sa tschi gomba and Gerdi gomba. The southern one belongs to Szechwan, the northern one to the province of Kansu. The Tibetans who live in the valleys and on the mountains around the monastery form a tribe of their own called Tawa. As among all Mah'ah'kana and many Koko Nor Tibetans, here as well as among the Twelve-Bu, the "lh" is pronounced like the English "th" or "t" in general, and thus in Sung pan I always heard about Thamo gomba or Tamo gomba instead of Lhamo gomba, and now I heard Ta wa instead of Lha pa, just as they always speak of Tasa instead of Lhasa. The body of water which divides the two monasteries is the upper part of the Tåwo kiang ts'a River which reaches China at Kiai (Gai) tschou under the name of Hei Schui or "black water." Both Lhamo monasteries are already subject to the Dschoni tu se, the Tibetan king of Mongolian descent whose seat is in Dschoni on the Tao River, 40 li east of the old city of Tao tschou, and who is or was also the ruler of the entire Tåwo Kiang ts'a territory. Seven hundred akkas are said to belong to the monasteries together; but ordinarily only about half of them live here, the rest live scattered about in the tents of the nomads. The buildings of the southern one of the two make a particularly favorable and neat impression. Its golden roofs and roof-support and red lines stand out against the dark background of tall timbers which extend up in back of a lateral valley. The green mountain slopes are crowned with white jags of rock like threatening towers and bastions and give the narrow ravine into which the monastery is squeezed a strange, mysterious appearance, suggesting the presence of gods and good btsan. The latter have imbued the Tibetans with sacred awe and have formed the flourishing holy shrine of the Gelugba faith. The good goblins have even caused a warm spring to gush forth here. (1) T 792

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1. From Lhamo se a road leads to Kue de, which the Scharba merchants often use. One travels first of all farther northwest to the low watersheds of the rivers. C 487

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> On the first day one reaches the land of the Samsa who are supposed to be very bad robbers; on the second day one gets to the Laringo or Larungo hsi tsang who once plundered the Holderer-Futterer expedition; from there in /299/ another three days one reaches the headwaters of the Tao Ho or Lŏ Chu and the Da ts'ang Mongols and without effort reaches the Tsei Chu along which live the Horsun Tibetans with their 800 families. After another two days one reaches Ratsong and the Ts'ien hu country of Lutsang (Tibetans) and the sphere of influence of Kue de ting. Another day's march takes one to the Wan schu tribe and two days later to the T'san and then to the city of Kue de.

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/299/ At Lhamo se the lively monastery brook which has already come far from the west from the grass lands, turns north for two kilometers and then again at right angles to the east. Not too far from the second bend lies the small monastery of Kosaniba. Behind it are the winter houses of the Radang and there, at the timber line, we came upon the encampment of Chinese troops, which consisted of rounded stone walls with poor loopholes, inside which the Chinese lived in inadequate tents and barracks. However, the officers and soldiers were still for the most part off to the "war" against the Radang, only the generalissimo of Szechwan along with 800 men had not gone into the field. Those who were left behind were angry and in an irritable mood and made me feel unmistakably that they were not at all edified by my appearance. The relationship between the two provincial contingents also left much to be desired. The plan of attack against the horse thieves was not designed to reap martial laurels. Caution is the better part of valor. The Chinese officers did not dare undertake anything independently, and always glanced helplessly sideways toward their superiors and to the wishes of the central government whose commands betrayed obvious suspicion as to the ability of their subordinates. The military rabble from Kansu had met with bitter opposition and from now on they wanted simply to feign attacks while the leader of the Sung pan soldiers who kept neutral in this new dispute, thought he would play the role of middleman. The war against Tāwo kiang ts'a (written: Tāo rgya mts'a) which was supposed to number 800 warriors, had also ended only by means of schang leang. The leaders were, to be sure, well advised from the very beginning and had attempted to push through from

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above, from the open, treeless steppe and not by the direct route into the ravines of Tāwo. But since, at the initial advance, 15 horsemen of the front detachment had fallen into ambush and were partly cut down and partly captured, the action during the rest of the summer months consisted only of threats until finally, with the help of the neighboring chieftains, and only because of the presence of troops, it was sche tsing schuo h'au leao, i.e., it was settled with talk. The Tāwo agreed to a partial disarmament and gave up 100 swords, 50 fork guns and 50 lances, but were permitted to keep the goods amounting to 12,000 ounces of silver which they had stolen from the Chinese merchants and on account of which the summons had come from Lanchow; there was not one single decisive action during the long summer on the part of an expedition that was almost as large as that of the English who marched into Lhasa in 1904. My escort had counted on getting new food supplies among their comrades. Behind my back they had traded in my supplies at Rao gomba so that only two rations were left. But the camp was itself short of rations because of the Radang incident. For everybody /300/ had thought the war was over and they would soon go home. No one had sent supplementary supplies. Thus my heroes nowhere found a merciful hand that would replace the rice and tsamba they had sold. However, because of the scant supplies I, too, unfortunately, suffered and was forced to cover the final distance at top speed. Within two hours we were again mounted and after three days in the saddle from morning till night we reached Tao tschou.

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Our first day's ride lasted until far into the night and took us over a plateau, through valley pockets and across flat passes where the waters that run eastward through the Tāwo Kiang ts'a territory, separate from those that flow north to the Tao Ho. Broad areas of steeply bent gray-green sandstone and slate with an east-west strike continued to interchange with wedged-in patches of crumbled white calcium carbonate; above this in many places there was a horizontal layer of hard, red Nagelfluh. The highest point we reached shortly before twilight at a pass of 3,765 meters. The mountain ridges here have an average height of somewhat over 4,000 meters. It was all good pasture land. For the time being there was no more forest from Kosaniba and the Chinese encampment on.

On the second day we had to go up and down steep inclines across the source waters of the Tao Ho tributaries and again climb a watershed of 3,800 meters. But by noon we reached a narrow wood ravine and entered the valley of the Wong Chu which breaks through the

C 133 487 mountain masses with many bends but in a east-northeast direction and for a long time flows almost parallel to the upper Tao ho. We had to ride through the rocky stream-bed 18 times and each time the underside of the packs dragged in the water.

On the first day we had still seen a few dozen nomad tents, on the second day we did not see any inhabitants anywhere and met only a supply- and munitions-train of the Kansu troops. When the escort spied us from afar they greeted us with a senseless and, fortunately, poorly-aimed gun salvo. It was only on the third day after we had traveled a few hours that we came to the upper-most Tibetan settlement, the little village of Dotsa, which lies at an altitude of 2,900 meters and belongs to the community of rDiadung. Here wild oats T 241 and some barley was planted in the valley bottom beside low, one-story houses. The fields in the 200-meter-wide valley floor are still extremely poor and stony. Every other year they must lie fallow. An hour farther down - the forest valley meanwhile widened to 400-500 meters - the fields became better and to the right and left of the broad Wong Chu, barley and turnips were being harvested, and women and men were busy loading their barley and even a little wheat on yak and transporting it to the scattered farms and into the large village of Merema where the sheaves are stacked on high, airy T 231 trestles next to their houses to dry, just as in Kin tschuan. Already at the first houses there were again grunting pigs, representatives of the small race of domestic pigs with light hair and pointed ears which all the farmers of southeastern Tibet also raise. Here, too, the men T 301 302 went out to the fields with their swords hanging on their belts and the women wore back-pendants that hung down to below their waist, similar to those of nomad women. At the temples they wear their hair braided, and into the braids on either side is tied a shell that has been filed down to make a firm ring, /301/ or a bronze ring set with red corals, and the two rings are joined with a piece of cloth which among the wealthy is studded with brass shells and corals (see Fig. 15). The hair at the crown of the head is braided into a thick mesh and is wound on a piece of leather 10 centimeters wide, which runs down the middle of the back and at the bottom is decorated with many small brass buttons.

T 792 At noon the large Gelugba monastery of Gaser gomba appeared on the left side of the Wong Chu; the Chinese also call it simply Gawo se or Gomba se. (Plate LXVIII). It is the chief monastery of the region and is supposed to have two huo fo ye, both of whom were, however, "in the process of exchange" at the time, and, as I was

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told, had just a year and a half before "died and had not yet been found again." T 792 The buildings of the monastery as well as a great many lay estates were already conspicuous from a distance because of their neatness and their fresh colors. Many lay houses were in the process of being built as a result of a war which had raged here two years before during which the monastery and village had been burned. But the difficult war times had already been forgotten. The loam houses, mostly one-storied, had been rapidly restored and the farmers on their fallow fields sang gay tunes behind their plows in front of which puffed vigorous yak bastards with Chinese neck yokes. On a meadow in front of the monastery the akka youth were playing with a T [526] large leather ball which they kicked with their feet and caught with their heads. T [64] Many wore full beards but there were also many with goiters and their faces looked broader than those of other Tibetans. However, the inhabitants claim to be genuine Tibetans; Chinese and Mohammedans are tolerated only as traders. C 487 • On the road near the monastery I met a walled encampment in which 100 horsemen were preparing to travel up the valley. It was a halting place, the riders belonged to the hsie tai near Kosaniba and were obliged to cover his path of advance and retreat. Below the monastery the road left the comfortable valley course; we again crossed the forest-covered mountains by way of a 3,360 meter high pass. Thereupon we entered a narrow wooded valley which did not end until late afternoon when a large river with clear green waves flowed directly across our path. C 133 Before me the Tao Ho, the Tibetan Lö Chu, wound through the mountains between precipitous walls. Meanwhile I had come down to 2,700 meters. In the autumn the river is here 90 and 100 meters wide, with a middle depth of 2.10 meters and a velocity of 1.7 meters. Judging by the shore marks, I should say that there is twice as much water in summer. But here in Kansu there had been dry weather for weeks already. This river, also, like the Han Kiang in the Tsinling mountain range and like the Dre Chu in K'am, follows the course of the narrow reef of vertical layers of slate; it has dug such a narrow circuitous bed into this, that up and down it is visible for only a few hundred meters; as though like a child wanting to play hide-and-seek, it immediately slips behind tall theater wings which give absolutely no indication as to the direction in which the valley continues.

C 133 T [501] One crosses the Tao Ho at Putanga, a Tibetan bit of land with few Chinese families. There a box-shaped vessel is tied to a rope which is stretched across the river. On the opposite, the left bank of

T 792 after the tall structures on the Tso Potala in Lhasa. Just in front of it is a walled grove and opposite on the mountain slope a large and beautiful park of spruce is treated as a reservation which the monks here, too, tend carefully, and in which it is strictly forbidden to harm any animal, any of the many wild hares and little mice.

T 533 As I ambled through the monastery streets and had just turned a corner I saw a strange picture in front of the main temple. Without masks or silk garments, bare-headed and barefooted, a large group of vigorous young men in their every-day priestly robes whirled and danced to the sound and beat of musical instruments. Are they whirling dervishes? Do the Buddhistic lamas here perhaps prepare for the Beyond by dancing? None of the on-lookers gave me any information and it was only in Hei tso that I learned I had happened on a rehearsal of monk-actors. The superb elasticity of these Tibetans was particularly evident with the absence of the usual theatrical baubles connected with a large performance. All their movements were as lithe as cats' but at the same time exact in detail and in chorus. Unfortunately, no one cared about my admiration. I was not to stand long, a silent on-looker, among the other people; only too soon a stone hit me and coarse fellows appeared who pursued me with two-meter-long leather whips until I ran behind the last priest house and the last prayer mill hut.

C 487 T 593 T 628 The distance between schTsu gomba and Labrang is figured at two days, but I was obliged to climb down to 2,750 meters and on the second day climb a pass 3,525 meters high. I was alone again, Mr. Ruhl having turned back at Hei tso. On the first day I passed the monasteries and hermitages of Kadya gomba, Retscho gomba, Taschi gomba and Lungwo gomba. It must have been the road which Potanin before me had followed. I should gladly have traveled through somewhat farther west but the tribe of Bora amtsoch' which lay west of schTsu gomba was in a state of bloody revenge with an equally-matched neighbor; the ratio of number killed stood at 15:21 and it was said in Hei tso that peace would only come when one of the tribes was completely defeated or the score of losses on either side was equal. (1)

(1) In 1844-1846 the tribes around the monastery of schTsu, or, (Chinese) Hei tso had risen up against the Chinese and were "calmed" only after long negotiations. Since then all Hsün hoa ting Tibetans have been divided into 20 domains.

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date and my Hsining amban passports were faked and not valid. When I reached Ta tsien lu the German consul in Tsch'eng tu fu had demanded per telegraph to know where I was going but had not, of course, even remotely considered providing me with recommendations to Sung pan ting when I replied to him, also by telegraph. /Plate LXXIV faces p. 320 in the original text. / /321/ Tsch'eng ðr fu ting of Sung pan ting who at each interview asked me for such recommendations, finally went so far as to send false reports and gossip about me to Tscheng tu fu and the German consul did not represent the interests of his countryman over against the Chinese, he did not examine the reports to see whether they were in accordance with the truth, he only sent them on and forthwith forbade me to make a new journey into the Ts'ao ti. Fortunately, I was already on my way and learned of what had happened only at the coast, on my way home. /Figure 14 appears on p. 321 in the original text. / /Table LXXV faces p. 321 in the original text. /

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CHAPTER XVII
Conclusion

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There are thousands of little roads and paths from the Labrang monastery into the Ts'ao ti, by means of thousands of threads is the mighty and rich lama residence connected with the wild hordes of the steppes. But down to China there is only one single road. This follows the winding course of the River Sang Chu on which the monastery is built. It leads past a few other monasteries and hermitages, past scattered Tibetan villages and small farms, and miserable fields wrested from the turbulent waters and the rocky slopes. Dense forests close it in and rocky peaks covered with glistening snow look proudly down on the wanderer who laboriously works his way over large stones, up and down, along passages bordering rock walls, through fords and other nuisances.

At last, on the third day, the mountains are suddenly lower; at a bend in the valley just below a Tibetan village an old wall blocks the valley. At the ruins of a gate, called kwan men, there are Chinese soldiers who gruffly demand a small sum from every countryman. We ride through the kwan men and suddenly the valley opens up and becomes the wide, fertile valley plain of Ho tschou, which from here extends 40 kilometers to the northeast. (1) The next step

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1. At this kwan men the shipment of Tibetan wool down

C T 439

> the river of Sang Chu begins, and it is transported on rafts made of tubes. Since 1900 trade in North Tibetan wool has taken on very significant aspects and the prices for raw wool have thus soared all at once in all of Kansu. The Yang hang, the agencies of foreign export firms, have thereby not become popular with the people, however; on the contrary, since all food supplies have risen concomitantly, the export firms are blamed for it, and rightly so.

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takes us into the loess country of Kansu and a white, dry hood of dust lies over the landscape. There are no more rocks to be seen. Only thick loess and beneath it red loam are the materials out of which the hills on either side of the valley are formed. There is one village after another. Soon the road is seething with people. They are hurrying to the market of Hanchow, in carts or mounted on donkeys, or mules, and covered with dust. For a little while the Tai tse Shan which my Sang River must break through on the way from Labrang sends me a farewell greeting from Tibet. A defiant warrior, a true Tibetan watchman, stiff and rigid with steep battlements, it gazes down upon China and upon the pale and barren loess. Too soon, however, it is lost to view; the loess haze lies too dense and thick over the valley. It had been only four days since it had rained and already the eye could not penetrate the fine dust for a great distance.

Two years before on my way from Di dao tschou I had become acquainted with the clay basin of the Ho tschou region where it extends from east to west. This time /323/ I traveled through it in a straight line to the chief city of the province, Lanchow fu. I had now reached the Chinese highways and the region of the hostleries in which I could get nourishing food for the animals; therefore I traveled from morning till night and in spite of my slow pack animals, the many mountains and poor roads, covered 100-140 li a day (50-70 kilometers).

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Very near the city of Ho tschou - exactly east of it - a mule track climbs up to a narrow, winding loess ridge which holds up the traveler for a day and a half and takes him through a labyrinth of deep ravines up to the banks of the Tao Ho (Plate LXII). At a depth of 20-30 meters loess covers the 300-400-meter mighty red clays and sands which in the main are deposited horizontally and in narrow ravines have been washed away by the flowing water, down to a substrata of granite. In the places where there is loess, civilization is possible. However, in the vicinity of the Tao Ho River it became

008 entertaining Scotsman knows that on this evening I could not have fallen into better hands, and that in the short hours before midnight my diaphragm had to withstand almost inhuman salvos of laughter. I hoped to meet other old acquaintances in Lanchow fu, but this time I was disappointed. My friend Van Dyk was with his bishop in the mission of Liang tschou fu for the annual retreat of the fathers. So, much to my regret, I could not even shake his hand in gratitude for his active participation in my efforts in safeguarding in his home the booty of my individual expeditions.

491 I stayed in the chief city until I had found a freight transport with which I could make a contract to have my baggage brought to Hsingan fu as soon as possible where I could pick it up again. Inasmuch as Mr. Shields helped me in this matter, I was able to leave the city in a few days. I rode on the large military highway between Lanchow fu and Hsingan fu, the road which also follows the telegraph line and which in the '70s the re-conqueror of Turkistan, the great Tso ts'ung tang, had had bordered with poplars for a distance of hundreds of kilometers. At one time, in order to protect this avenue, he put a death sentence on every wanton destruction of a tree. The trees still stand for stretches covering many days' journeys, but the track often cannot follow the old avenue for long stretches. Loess makes the ground too loose. Rains have often lengthened and deepened the valley fissures by hundreds of meters and thus the rows of trees border ravines which today no man can cross; meanwhile traffic often had to take an entirely different direction.

361 At the stopping place of Ngan (An) ting hsien the camel- and
•484 /325/ mule-drivers who take care of a large part of the freight traf-
fic between Kansu and Shensi, take a somewhat more southerly route
133 than do the carts. I continued to follow this mule track and decided to combine it with a stop-over at Ts'inchow, the richest city of Kansu. In the vicinity of Ngan ting hsien the country is still rather thinly populated. Only after 100 li did I get to Niu yin, a town of 100 families, and 20 li beyond came Ma yin which has 400-500 families and a larger market. Close by, the brook breaks through a granite range, the first solid rock that I saw since the Hwang Ho ditch near Lanchow fu, and behind Ma yin the loess became thinner and only a few decameters thick. The density of population increased visibly and the Mohammedan element which is very numerous along the road near Huining hsien and Lung te hsien, Ping liang fu, fell into
133 the background. I had now come into a definitely mountainous

and a few oil lamps in the main street. A dao tai li had made himself very unpopular with the population two years before because he wanted to force them to sweep the streets and because he numbered the houses. He aroused superstitious fear in doing so and it almost came to open rebellion. 178

Following the broad fertile valley of the Hsi Ho, one travels from Tsinchow at first for a few hours between rice fields and persimmon trees beneath which poppies are grown - Tsinchow was, before the war on opium, /327/ the center of opium-growing. In the afternoon we crossed over in a ferry to the northern shore of the Wei Ho (1,120 meters above sea level). Only a poor foot-path follows the course of the Wei River, and this serves the small amount of local traffic. The main road, a mule track leads over Tsing schui hsien with about 3,000 inhabitants (1) and 15 li from there to the east I came out of the loess-covered clay mountains of the Tsinchow basin into granite and entered a tangled and lonely wooded mountain range which is connected with the Liu pan Shan and the mountain of Kung dung Shan (40 li southwest of Ping liang fu) to which pilgrimages are made. We soon lost our way completely in the ravines, had a wet bivouac in the woods and did not get to the large mule track and across the highest point on it, the Da kwan Shan pass (2,250 meters), for two days. From this high point we looked south across long, equally high ridges to the peaks, already snow-capped, of the Tsin lung range, while in the east we already saw the low-lying loess of the lower Wei Valley basin. I was now only a few hours from the commercial city of Lung tschou which is still 980 meters high, and soon one admires from below the mountain wall which extends in almost meridional direction from Tsin ling Shan to the Lo Shan, Niu tou Shan and Ala Shan and separates the present-day province of 487 ● [249]

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1. A day's journey farther to the north is the important and busy spot of Tschwang kia tschwan under the jurisdiction of the Tsing schui mandarin, in which only Hui hui live and in which the chief ahun of the entire region has his residence.

In the Tsing schui district I saw for the last time a veiled Chinese woman. The custom that a young woman wears a black face veil in the first years of her marriage if she shows herself in public, is as frequent in the district of Tsinchow as in that of Hsining fu. [56]

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487 Shensi from Kansu. I had come down another level into the lowland, a formation of land which our map had not yet indicated. Down in the province of Shensi I again stood on my familiar Shensi-Ordos clod [316] of earth. Here, too, at Lung tschou, the Chinese have since olden times worked coal pits which yielded good coal. But because the roads are too poor, the coal is sent only for a distance of a two-days' journey, beyond Kien yang hsien.

[99] My journey continued without stopping, ever deeper into the rich, the beautiful, the new China. In Kien yang hsien I was invited for supper by two gracious Swedish ladies who were doing quiet missionary work all alone here in this outpost. A further day's march brought me into the city of Feng tsiang fu, and the next day saw me in the city of Ki schan hsien; herewith I had reached the big old Szechwan road. Everywhere there were magnificent hotels by the side of the road. Large carts loaded with snowy cotton were heading into the cities. In one day I road through half a dozen chief cities of districts. At Sien yang hsien for the last time we crossed the Wei Ho which at that city is muddy and thick and only 360 meters above sea level. Here the Szechwan road on which I traveled at the end and the cart road to Lanchow fu unite. There are seven large ferries to take care of the heavy traffic during the high waters in summer, while every winter a trestle bridge is built. Round about on the flat hills are old earth mounds which have been the burial places for countless emperors of the old dynasties, those of Hsingan fu, the Tschang ngan of old.

000 /328/ Ever since I had left Lanchow fu I was goaded on by the fear that on account of my detour I might arrive in Hsingan fu later than my carts and chests and that my property might get lost if there was no one to receive it at its place of destination. But now, after much telegraphing back and forth, it turned out that they had not even left Lanchow fu. Again my mind had not worked sufficiently in the manner of the Chinese merchants. It had occurred to some clever individual to use my shipment in order to smuggle a few boxes of water-pipe tobacco through the customs. But it had been done too boldly and so everything, my chests as well as the tobacco chests, were confiscated. Finally Mr. Shields was called in by the draymen to help because he had recommended the hang to me. When he came to the custom station the officials and soldiers were rummaging, amid pouring rain, among the bird skins, butterflies and the various oddities. Without Mr. Shields' help I would again have had to undertake the month-long trek to Lanchow in order to get my belongings.